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THE EVOLUTION OF PRUSSIA

THE MAKING OF AN EMPIRE

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FELLOW OF ALL SOULS

NEW EDITION

OXFORD

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

1937

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
AMEN HOUSE, E.C. 4
London Edinburgh Glasgow New York
Toronto Melbourne Capetown Bombay
Calcutta Madras
HUMPHREY MILFORD
PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY

FIRST PUBLISHED, 1915
REPRINTED, 1917, 1922, 1932
NEW EDITION, 1937

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

PREFACE

THIS book represents a preliminary attempt to fill a conspicuous and somewhat discreditable gap in our historical literature. There are useful chapters on the history of Prussia in many text-books of general European history; there are excellent monographs on special periods, such as the English translation of Ranke's *Memoirs of Brandenburg*, or Mr. Fisher's study of Napoleonic Germany; there are well-known biographies, such as Carlyle's *Frederick* and Seeley's *Stein*. But we are not aware of any work which fulfils the purpose which we have had in view. We have attempted to set forth the story of the rise and development of Brandenburg-Prussia and the later Prussianization of Germany under the Hohenzollern dynasty, and to set it forth, briefly and simply, but as a connected whole and with due regard to the claims of historical scholarship. We have deemed it wise to bring the narrative to a close with the fall of Bismarck, since the events of the last twenty-five years have not yet fallen into historical perspective, and cannot be disentangled from political controversy; but, for the convenience of readers, the main facts have been succinctly narrated in an epilogue.

Original research on Brandenburg-Prussian history has already been exhaustively carried out by many scholars,

and we have availed ourselves freely both of their sources and the results they have established. The scope and compass of this book have not permitted detailed reference to such authorities and have obliged us to exclude much material which we may have a subsequent opportunity of utilizing. A short list of general books will be found in an appendix, and to each chapter or group of chapters a list of more special authorities has been suffixed. It is hoped that this list may be helpful to teachers both in the Universities and in Secondary Schools, and not less to the general reader who may desire to pursue the study of special aspects or periods of Prussian history.

The maps have been prepared solely with a view to the elucidation of the text.

J. A. R. MARRIOTT.
C. GRANT ROBERTSON.

OXFORD,
October 1915.

NOTE TO NEW EDITION

ADVANTAGE has been taken of a New Edition to correct a few slips in the text, to add some recent works to the short bibliographies at the end of the chapters, and that following 'The Epilogue', to revise the map on p. 380, so as to show the changes made by the Treaty of Versailles, and above all to supplement the Epilogue itself, written in 1915, by a summary of the new and voluminous evidence on the period from the resignation of Bismarck in 1890 to the outbreak of the Great War. Prussia, strictly and historically speaking, ceased to exist in 1914. No attempt has been made in these pages to trace the downfall of the Hohenzollern dynasty or the absorption of Prussia into the Third Reich and the Nazi Totalitarian State.

J. A. R. M.
April, 1937. C. G. R.

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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE CHIEF DATES IN THE EVOLUTION OF PRUSSIA

A. D.

928. Foundation of the North Mark by Henry I, 'The Fowler.'

1134. Albert 'The Bear' founds the Ascanian line as Margrave of Brandenburg.

1225-1446. The Teutonic Order Christianizes and colonizes Prussia.

1320. End of the Ascanian line in Brandenburg.

1417. Frederick I, of Hohenzollern, Burgrave of Nuremberg, invested with the electorate of Brandenburg.

1519-25. Albert of Hohenzollern, Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, secularizes East Prussia.

1609. Cleves-Jülich succession claimed by Elector of Brandenburg.

1618. Sigismund, Elector of Brandenburg, invested with the duchy of East Prussia. The Thirty Years' War begins.

1640. Accession of the Great Elector, Frederick William.

1648. Treaties of Westphalia. Territorial gains of Brandenburg-Prussia.

1660. East Prussia freed from Polish suzerainty.

1688. Death of the Great Elector.

1701. Frederick I acquires the Prussian crown—'King in Prussia'.

1713. Accession of Frederick William I.

1719. Acquisition of Stettin and part of western Pomerania.

1740. Accession of Frederick the Great, and of Maria Theresia. First Silesian War.

1745. Acquisition of Silesia by the Treaty of Dresden.

1756. The Seven Years' War begins.

1763. Peace of Hubertsburg. Acquisition of Silesia confirmed.

A. D.

1772. First Partition of Poland. Acquisition of West Prussia. Frederick takes title of 'King of Prussia'.
1785. Frederick forms the League of Princes (*Fürstenbund*).
1786. Death of Frederick the Great. Accession of Frederick William II.
1788. Triple Alliance.
1791. Declaration of Pillnitz.
1792. War with France.
1793. Second Partition of Poland.
1795. Third Partition of Poland. Treaty of Basel.
1797. Treaty of Campo-Formio.
Accession of Frederick William III.
1799. Congress of Rastadt.
1801. Treaty of Lunéville.
1803. Act of Mediatization.
1805. Treaties of Schönbrunn and Pressburg.
1806. Confederation of the Rhine. Battles of Jena and Auerstädt.
1807. Battles of Eylau, Friedland. Treaty of Tilsit. Reform in Prussia.
1809. Risings in North Germany.
1812. Napoleon's invasion of Russia.
1813. War of German Liberation.
1814. First Treaty of Paris.
1815. The Congress of Vienna—*Final Act* (June 10). Waterloo Campaign. Second Treaty of Paris.
1816. Reaction in Germany.
1818. Fiscal reform (The *Zollverein*).
1819. Karlsbad decrees.
1830. Insurrection in Germany.
1833. League of the Three 'Emperors' (*Dreikaiserbund*).
1840. Accession of Frederick William IV.
1847. Prussian United Diet.
1848. Revolution in Germany.
1849. Dissolution of Frankfort Parliament.
1851. Restoration of the *Bund*.

A. D.

1861. Accession of William I (Regent 1858).
1862. Bismarck becomes Minister-President.
1863. The question of the Danish duchies (Schleswig and Holstein).
1865. Convention of Gastein.
1866. Seven Weeks' War. Treaty of Prague.
1867. North German Confederation.
1870. Franco-German War.
1871. The new German Empire.
1873. The *Kulturkampf* and the May Laws.
1878. Congress and treaties of Berlin.
1879. Dual Alliance of Germany and Austria. Bismarck breaks with the National Liberals. Commencement of the policy of Protection and State Socialism.
1882. Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria and Italy.
1884. Commencement of the foundation of a colonial empire.
1888. Death of William I. Accession and death of Emperor Frederick III. Accession of William II.
1890. Resignation of Bismarck (who died 1898). Death of Moltke (1891). Agreement with Great Britain over East Africa and Zanzibar. Heligoland ceded to Germany.
1897. First Naval Law. (Confirmed and extended 1900, 1905, 1909, 1911.)
1906. Conference at Algeçiras.
1908. Annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria.
1911. 'The Agadir Crisis.' Franco-German Convention respecting Morocco and Equatorial Africa.
1914. Assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Austro-Serbian Crisis.
August 4. The Great European War.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

Since the death of Frederick the Great in 1786 the kingdom of Prussia has been a state of a unique type, occupying a special position both in Germany and in Europe. Since 1867 it has accomplished by its own methods a momentous task, the unification of Germany and the erection of a German Empire, under the presidency of the House of Hohenzollern. Since 1871 it is not without the justification of historical fact and present realities that when we speak of Germany we think of Prussia, and when we speak of Prussia we are thinking of Germany. Prussia in Germany.

'The whole Empire', wrote Treitschke (*Politik*, ii. 346), 'is based historically and politically on the fact that it is (as Emperor William once said to Bismarck) "an extended Prussia", that Prussia is the dominant factor, both in fact and in formula. What is our German Imperial army? Unquestionably it is the Prussian army, which, by the Army Bill of 1814, was developed into a nation in arms, extending over the whole Empire. The German Imperial Post, the telegraph system, the Imperial Bank are old Prussian institutions, extended to the Empire. . . . The conditions are such that the will of the Empire can in the last instance be nothing else than the will of the Prussian state.'

If the supremacy of Prussia in the modern German Empire rests on the sure foundations of a great prestige and a great tradition, it rests no less on solid and Modern Prussia.

indisputable facts; on the characteristic features of the Prussian state, the geographical and territorial position of Prussia in Germany, the prerogatives of the Prussian monarchy, the alliance of that monarchy with the governing class, the strength of the Prussian army, civil bureaucracy and administration, the Imperial navy, which is essentially a Prussian creation, and whose arsenals are Prussian strongholds; on the organization of intellect and the industrial resources and economy of the Prussian people. It is no less indisputable that neither within nor without the boundaries of the German Empire is there any German state capable of challenging, singlehanded or in combination with other German states, the supremacy of Prussia. The defeat of Austria and her exclusion from Germany in 1866–7 were the indispensable conditions of a German Empire controlled and directed by Prussia, and the political reality on which that German Empire was founded. Since 1871 Austria, so far as she is a German state, could only be a vassal ally, not a rival, of Prussia. The gravamen of Bismarck's indictment of Prussian policy between 1815 and 1860 has been decisively and finally reversed. If Prussian policy in that epoch was made, as he asserted truly enough, at Vienna, and not at Berlin, Austrian policy from 1879 to 1914 has been made at Berlin and not at Vienna.

The basis of Prussian power.

Facts and statistics are impressive. The supreme direction of the military and political affairs of the Empire is vested in the German Emperor, and the Imperial crown is hereditary[1] in the House of Hohenzollern. Of 208,780 square miles of German territory 134,616 are

[1] Virtually, though not technically. Cf. p. 372 *infra*.

Prussian; of 65,000,000 of subjects of the German Empire 40,000,000 are subjects of the King of Prussia; of 86 towns with a population of over 50,000 inhabitants 55 are Prussian; of the Federal contributions to the Imperial Budget (Matricular-Beiträge), amounting to £12,750,000, Prussia contributes £8,000,000. Since 1871 the Imperial Chancellor (with the exception of Prince Hohenlohe) has always been a member of the Prussian service; Prussia has 17 members out of 61 in the Federal Council (Bundesrat) and 236 out of 397 in the Imperial Parliament (Reichstag). Of the 25 active corps of the German army Prussia (with Baden and Hesse, whose troops are amalgamated with the Prussian) provides 17. There is no imperial ministry of war; the functions of such a ministry are performed by the Prussian War Office, placed in Berlin, which prepares the military budgets of Saxony and Würtemberg. In whichever direction we turn, or whatever test we apply, the formula *Preussen, Preussen über Alles*—Prussia first at all costs—is the practical translation of the famous song. To the Prussian soldier, civil servant and Junker, as well as to the Emperor William I, Prince Bismarck and Professor von Treitschke, the Empire is 'an extended Prussia', in which, if there is a collision of interests, Prussia must prevail, for it is Prussia's strength that makes the Empire formidable and Prussian institutions and Prussian organization that are the secret of dynastic splendour and Imperial power. Without the Empire Prussia would be a state of the first rank, but without Prussia Germany would be an appanage of the mongrel Habsburg Dual Monarchy. 'When I am thus amongst Prussian excellencies,' wrote Prince Hohenlohe, the

Imperial Chancellor, 'the contrast between North and South Germany becomes very perceptible to me. South German Liberalism is no match for the young aristocrats. They are too numerous, too powerful, and have the kingdom and the army too much on their side. Moreover the Centre goes with them. . . . As I laboured from 1866 to 1870 for the union of South and North, so I must strive now to keep Prussia attached to the Empire. For all these gentlemen don't care a fig for the Empire, and would rather give it up to-day than to-morrow' (December 15, 1898, *Memoirs*, ii. 474). 'What I see', wrote von Roon, thirty-five years earlier, 'in history is force. . . . The Schleswig-Holstein question is not a question of law or of pedigrees; it is a question of force, and we [Prussians] have it.'

Berlin as a capital.

Prussia has, moreover, not merely unified Germany, she has given Germany a capital, or, more accurately, has made the capital of Prussia the capital of Germany. Neither the Germany of the Dark Ages and of Charles the Great, nor the Germany of Saxon, Hohenstaufen, Luxemburg and Habsburg emperors had a real capital. Individual states, princely dynasties, rich industrial areas had centres of racial, dynastic or economic life and ambition; there were cities which were treasuries of national or religious sentiment or artistic and industrial achievement, but neither Aachen nor Dresden, neither Mainz nor Heidelberg, neither Frankfort nor Munich, neither Köln nor Augsburg were capitals as London or Paris were capitals; centres where the political, military, administrative, dynastic, economic, intellectual and spiritual life of a nation, conscious of its unity, met and blended and

radiated forth, the loss of which would have truncated the vitality and articulated mechanism of an organic state. Vienna and the Hofburg were the home of Habsburg emperors, but Vienna never was, and never pretended to be, the capital of Germany. Napoleon's entry into Vienna at the head of the Grand Army did not mean what the entry of the Allies into Paris meant in 1814, nor what the German entry meant in 1871; and had Napoleon declared himself emperor in imperial Schönbrunn the ceremony would have proclaimed a message to Germany and Europe very different from the message proclaimed to France and the world on January 18, 1871 when, to the reverberating assent of the siege guns bombarding Paris, the King of Prussia was hailed German Emperor in the Galerie des Glaces at Versailles. For what, as Treitschke scornfully asks, when he describes the Congress of Vienna, has Vienna stood in the life of Germany and the German people? It has stood, he answers, for dynastic selfishness, dismemberment, frustrated hopes and intellectual nullity. In 1871 Prussia gave to Germany, or imposed on her, a capital in the true sense, entry into which by the armed hosts of a foreign foe would be the *coup de grâce*. But the visitor to Berlin, as he walks through the Thiergarten, the Siegesallee, and Unter den Linden, passing the statues of dim and forgotten electors till the statue of Frederick the Great bids him halt, feels that he may be in the capital of Germany, but that all around him are the realizations not of German but of Prussian dreams. Frederick rides there in the bronze of Rauch, as he rode in life, *toujours en vedette* for his Prussia, and he is flanked on every side by the memories in enduring stone that

speak of the triumphs that his reign and spirit inspired. Stand by the Prussian sentry at the Königswache in the ghostly watches; those trumpets blowing into the winds of night are the trumpets of Ziethen's and Seydlitz's hussars, and the dim figure in the blue uniform with the red facings who silently takes our salute is Scharnhorst, or Moltke, or maybe Frederick himself.

The historical problem.

The Evolution of Prussia and the Making of an Empire. How and when did this Prussia come into existence, by what stages has it developed, and by what methods and with what end in view has it advanced, line upon line, precept upon precept, to the Prussia of to-day that has gathered the empire of the German nation under the double-headed eagle?

Brandenburg.

The history, as all the books tell us, begins in 1415, when a Hohenzollern Burgrave from the Germany of the south came into the March of Brandenburg as elector. The March of Brandenburg certainly had none of the characteristics that are the distinctive features of the modern Prussia. It was not a military principality, not an intellectual centre, it was not yet Protestant and tolerant, not strong in its administrative framework, not agriculturally rich nor endowed with industrial wealth buried in its undeveloped fields and marshes. It had no windows to the expanding sea; it was surrounded by older dynasties: powerful, greedy, and jealous neighbours. Brandenburg was in 1415 the least of all the electorates, and its electoral hat was somewhat tattered. The Hohenzollern who had left the pleasant and prosperous farms of Franconia and the red roofs of a thriving city for this cold, inhospitable and forbidding north took over a doubtful mortgage, a

principality some of which was in pawn, and a sour and sandy soil on which brutal manorial chiefs and brutish serfs fought a dour and relentless battle with nature and with each other. No one in 1415 could have foreseen that this masterful and ambitious Burgrave from Franconia was starting afresh in his impoverished and anarchic electorate the evolution of a principality which in four hundred and fifty years would be the most important purely German state in Europe, that the tattered electoral hat would be adorned with a crown, won in the far east at Königsberg, and that the rod of the 'Hohenzollern toy from Nuremberg' would have swallowed up the rod of Wettin, Welf, Wittelsbach, and Habsburg. No one was probably less conscious of the historic mission of Prussia to achieve the unity of Germany than the Hohenzollern who in 1417 kneeled at the feet of a Luxemburg Caesar to receive investiture as an elector of the Holy Roman Empire. For in 1417 there was no Prussia in existence; two hundred years at least must pass before Brandenburg-Prussia existed even in name.

Stages o growth.

A modern Prussian historian, Droysen, one of the chief founders of the faith in Prussia's historic mission, has marked out the great stages in the evolution of Prussian policy and of the Prussian state: the territorial formation (1415–1618); the era of illuminated despotism (1618–1786); the epoch of revolution, collapse and recovery (1786–1815); the renaissance and unification (1815–1871); and to these must be added the purely modern era, Prussia as the director of an empire, the most powerful of the continental states of Europe, superimposing on

its empire a world-economy and a world-policy (1871–1914).

The purpose of this book.

The object of the following chapters is to trace, define and mark the broad features of the historical process by which the electorate of 1415 has passed into the German Empire of to-day. It is not our intention to write a history of Prussia in the sense of a detailed or an abbreviated narrative of events, but to explain and estimate the significance and contribution of each stage in the development and final result. Historical importance cannot be measured by wealth of detail or in terms of years. A single ruler or a single generation may accomplish more than a whole century. The relative value and proportion of individuals and of events to the process as a whole are the vital and informing realities; the scheme of the chapters and the allotment of space, as a glance at the table of contents reveals, have been determined not by length of time, counted in years, but by the intrinsic character of the subject-matter. Our purpose and task have been to ascertain and emphasize how and when out of inorganic elements has been hammered on the anvil of European history an organic unity, and how a consciousness of that organic unity was created and grew, in the struggle for existence and the pressure of conflicting ambitions. A developing organism must needs adapt itself to the conditions of its environment, but a stage is always reached when the organism is strong enough to mould and adapt the conditions so as to further its own purposive action. That stage was reached in 1740; it was completed in 1786. 'It is not necessary that I should live,' wrote Frederick, 'but it is necessary

that I should act.' What Bismarck said in a famous speech in 1888 was true of Prussia from 1640 onwards:

> We must make greater exertions than other powers on account of our geographical position. We lie in the middle of Europe; we can be attacked on all sides. God has put us in a situation in which our neighbours will not allow us to fall into indolence or apathy. The pike in the European fish-pond prevent us from becoming carp.

Territorial formation.

The stage of territorial formation obviously comes first. When the Spaniard was holding east and west in fee, when Valois and Bourbon kings were unifying round the *ville lumière* of Paris the France of Villon, Ronsard, Rabelais and Brantôme, when the Tudor England of the Reformation and of Shakespeare, mewing its mighty Angevin youth, was dipping its wings in the waters of the dawn, the dreary and provincial chronicle of Brandenburg history invites at first sight our attention to dreary and provincial achievement. But those early electors whom dynastic pride or professorial piety have disinterred from the dust of parochial archives for the laurels and the gold of the Siegesallee, and who seem as much surprised to find themselves the ornaments of the Avenue of Victory as we are to find them there, could at least say of the two hundred years from 1415–1618, *Nous avons vécu.* They had lived—they had avoided dismemberment and the fatal German tendency of their day to split into sub-dynasties—they had become Protestants, they had seized all that their neighbours had allowed them to seize, and in seizing they had always staked out claims for their successors to make good—if they could. To have lived, and to be stronger at the end

than at the beginning, was, in the Germany of Charles V and Ferdinand I, no small achievement. The electors had brought Brandenburg-Prussia into existence on the ruins of the Teutonic Order, though they had not founded a state; for the elector who now ruled in East Prussia, on the Rhine, and in the March of Brandenburg, was a prince whose tripartite and separated territories had nothing as yet in common but a Hohenzollern master, and the pike in the European pond was seeking for carp to be devoured before they became pike like itself. The Hohenzollerns had roughly jointed together the geographical and territorial base on which a state could be founded, and with the consciousness of that fact and with the vision of the heavens and the earth around him black with storm Elector John Sigismund in 1619 went to his rest. He and his predecessors had finished the first chapter of a story, the end of which they neither foresaw nor expected.

Critical epochs.

In the long and thick book that follows after 1618 four critical epochs stand out with unmistakable significance: the age of the Great Elector; the age of Frederick the Great; the age of Stein, and the age of Bismarck. So far as four men could, these four made Prussia; and if we wish briefly to sum up their work we can say that the Great Elector determined the mission and functions of the Prussian ruler, Frederick established the Prussian state, Stein and Scharnhorst made the Prussian nation in arms, and Bismarck unified the German Empire on the triple basis of the supremacy of the Prussian monarchy, the Prussian state, and the Prussian nation in arms.

With one exception these critical and formative epochs are preceded by periods of decline and failure. But it is not the least remarkable characteristic of the evolution of Prussia that when the fortunes of the state most urgently needed a great man, who could forget nothing and learn everything, that man has been produced or has been absorbed into Prussian service. The Great Elector rescued Brandenburg-Prussia from the impotence and exhaustion to which the futility of his father had reduced it in the Thirty Years' War. Stein and his compeer Scharnhorst recreated Prussia after the catastrophe of Jena, the final *dénouement* of the moral, intellectual, financial and political bankruptcy that set in after the death of Frederick the Great. Bismarck's work began when the convention of Olmütz had robbed Prussia of the position won in 1815. Prussia had contemplated being dissolved in Germany, and had refused to be the leader of a new, liberal and nationalist Fatherland; she had capitulated to the illiberal and denationalizing reaction of the House of Habsburg. The Liberals who wished to destroy the military Junkers, the Junkers who thirsted to avenge the March Days, shared in common a bitter humiliation. Olmütz was the greatest of Metternich's triumphs over Prussia, though it was Schwarzenberg, not Metternich, who inflicted the defeat.

Four great figures.

Frederick the Great is the exception. He inherited an army, an administrative machine, a system, and a tradition. Had he been simply a ruler of sound and average capacity his Prussia might have played an interesting part in the Europe of Maria Theresia, Kaunitz, and Joseph II, of Pitt, Vergennes, and Catherine the Great, but had remained

Frederick the Great.

a respectable second-rate state. Frederick, unquestionably the greatest of all the Hohenzollern rulers, was the most gifted and versatile figure in European history between William III and Napoleon. Some men, as Seeley has well said of William III, are born into a great place and show their greatness simply by filling it. But Frederick was not born into a great place. He inherited a crown of the second rank and the blue and red uniform; he had been bred in the graceless and starving atmosphere of the barrack-yard, the parade ground, and the 'Tobacco Parliament'. The distinctive quality of his career is the conscious persistence with which he snatched greatness from his competitors on whom it was thrust and thrust it upon himself. The Europe of 1740 was as unconscious of Frederick's quality, and of what genius could make of Prussia, as was the Europe that enjoyed epigrams on the Junker, 'a red reactionary and smelling of blood,' who became Minister-President in 1862. The march into Silesia in December 1740, 'the crossing of the Rubicon with waving banners and resounding music,' was a reverberating stroke with the uncovered spearhead of the Hohenzollern lance at the shield of the House of Habsburg. Austria was the rival who blocked the way to Prussian greatness, and at Mollwitz were fairly joined the issues that were finally decided at Königgrätz.

Foreign policy.

In the throw of the iron dice the sword would not be the sole umpire of the duel. Frederick's alliances are as illuminating as are the alliances of Bismarck. Bismarck, who could have written a better monograph on Frederick than the great savants who made the age of Bismarck so

notable, had learned from Frederick the vital principles of a Prussian *Realpolitik*. Prussia must achieve as much by diplomacy as by 'blood and iron', and if force is the executor of policy the field for force must first be carefully mapped out and prepared. In Frederick's alliances, as shifting in duration as they were definite in aim, Bismarck discovered the *arcanum imperii*, that Prussia by herself was impotent, and that the European state system must be so manipulated as to compel the jealous friend and the avowed foe to promote or acquiesce in the achievement of Prussian aims under the most favourable conditions. Bismarck's handling of German kings and princes, of Napoleon III and Alexander II, of Italy and Great Britain, has no parallel in Frederick's handling of France, England, the German states, and Russia, except in its spirit, its principles of action, and its objects—the defeat of Austria and the supremacy of Prussia. In foreign policy, above all, Frederick was the master of Bismarck, and Bismarck would have been the first to claim the discipleship. Porson said of the Eton boy's verses, 'I can see in them a great deal of Horace and Vergil, but nothing Horatian or Vergilian.' Nothing more completely damns the Epigoni from 1786–1806 than their failure to recognize the difference between the slavish copying of phrases and the reproduction of the master's spirit in a new vocabulary. They were obstinately blind in supposing that Prussia was strong enough to stand by herself, and that the Prussian state could be kept great by selfish, sterile and stagnant isolation? A Prussia without friends or allies had every one for a foe, and was drifting, as events dramatically proved

Frederick's pupils.

to self-imposed disaster and merited dismemberment. Stein and Hardenberg for their age, Bismarck for his, returned to the Frederician spirit, traditions, and principles. In the epic of their achievement there is little or nothing of the letter of Frederick, but there is everything that is Frederician.

Political theory.

No less notable in these critical epochs is the interpretation of life from which was built up a political theory of statecraft. To the Prussia of the age of Bismarck we commonly attribute an emphasis on state-necessity, the worship of force, the reasoned conviction that might can supersede right and furnish an invulnerable ethical title to power. It is not merely the erection into a creed of the evolutionary beatitude, 'Blessed are the strong, for they shall prey on the weak,' nor an unflinching adherence to the doctrine that ends justify means. It is this, and something deeper, grander, and more quickening to action: *Salus Prussiae suprema lex*—the principle that on the ruler is imposed a moral obligation, the duty to maintain and to extend the state. The sum of political ethics and the categorical imperatives of statecraft are derived from the nature of the state which prescribes the end and provides the means; the state whose prosperity justifies every sacrifice and annuls or transcends every moral rule. Political morality is a higher and more binding morality; it is independent of and superior to social morality and the canons of individual and private conduct.

Criticism of the theory.

The origins and evolution of this interpretation of political life must be sought in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; but the criticisms passed on the Great Elector, on Frederick, and on Bismarck,

are only too often criticisms the force and relevance of which they would peremptorily brush aside or flatly deny. What we call a patent lack of conscience and absence of moral scruples; disregard of plighted word or treaty obligations; cynical indifference to the character of the means, provided that the end in view be adequate; employment of all the weapons of diplomacy—to these charges they would not plead guilty, and their answer, not their defence, would be that the indictment ignored the nature of political ethics and rested on an elementary and academic confusion of the moral code of the individual with the moral code of the ruler and the state. 'The jurisprudence of sovereigns', said Frederick, 'is commonly the right of the stronger.' 'The only sound principle of action for a great state is political egoism, and not Romanticism,' was Bismarck's deliberate avowal.

Frederick the Prussian.

In this momentous chapter of Prussian political thought, the influence and efficacy of which lay in its cool translation into deeds, Frederick's reign is the decisive epoch. He inherited from his father and the Great Elector the deposit of experience, a dynastic tradition and a message which he consolidated into a system of thought and a school of policy. But what might in other hands have become the polished pedantry of a king's cabinet or the maxims of a copy-book for statesmen were in his dissolved and recombined in the spectrum of a rich and compelling vitality, and shone out on the world with all the irresistible magic of a personal example. The identification of the interest of the state with the duty of the ruler, the mission of the Hohenzollern monarch,

because he was born a Prussian, to achieve the grandeur of Prussia, the emphasis on the service of the state as the highest of all forms of service, demanding the sacrifice of every consideration, personal or ethical—this was his contribution to the theory of kingship and to the diplomacy and philosophy of his day. He exemplified it by a career of toil which amazed and enthralled his generation—all the more remarkable because Frederick shared with Swift an inexhaustible contempt for human beings and an unmistakable belief in the depravity of men and women. 'Ah, my dear Sulzer,' was his famous retort, 'you do not know the damned race as I do,' yet it was for this damned race that he toiled like a black in the sugar season; and out of it that he hammered and drilled the Prussian of the eighteenth century. A life and a personality—that was a more potent legacy even than the victory of Rosbach and the acquisition of Silesia. It was Frederick the king, the incarnation of Prussia, who stamped himself on the imagination and became the model for the governing classes to come. 'We all wish', wrote Bismarck, with Frederick in his mind, 'that the Prussian eagle should spread out his wings as guardian and ruler from the Memel to the Donnersberg, but free will we have him. Prussians we are and Prussians we will remain . . . and I hope to God that we will still long remain Prussians when this sheet of paper is forgotten like a withered autumn leaf.'

The state as power.

The state as power, the ruler as the personification and executor of the power of the state, efficiency as the infallible criterion of the machinery of administration, the determination of foreign and international relations

by the interest of the state—the progressive interpretation and adoption of these principles of service and government explain the origin and emphasize the development of the most characteristic organs of a national life, which in combination for a single end made Prussia a type unique in the polities of Europe. Power and efficiency as ideals mean a powerful and efficient governing class, controlling all the resources of the community. The prerequisites are the unity of aim, the concentration of effort, the knowledge, the trained brain, and disciplined character of the expert. The service of the state in all its branches must therefore be an expert service. Amateurism involves individualism and waste. Society must be so arranged as to provide from the appropriate class the servants required, and the state in its own interest must then equip them with knowledge, training, and discipline, which will habituate those who serve to the self-sacrifice required. An army, a civil bureaucracy, and a university, based on a social economy carefully graded to the needs of the political organism, are seen to be indispensable organs of an expanding state which can only advance at the expense of its neighbours and in virtue of a higher efficiency.

The army.

Geography had denied Prussia a frontier. But the army could be made the frontier and thus convert a grave natural disadvantage into a positive superiority. The army must be the state exercising force, the executor of policy, maintaining the power already won and always ready to strike for the greater power to come. The army will not be the luxury of a ruler, nor will it merely provide a career for the idle, the rich, or the adventurous, still

less a class privilege or a means of earning a livelihood in competition with other careers and professions. Service in the army is the first and supreme civic duty, incumbent on all members of the state according to their class and place. Sacrifice to the interests of the army is sacrifice to the interests of the state in their most virile and effective form. A duty ceases to be a sacrifice and becomes a privilege and the symbol of citizenship. The army of Frederick the Great at first sight seems stained with all the social and economic injustice and the caste organization of a society that was an anachronism at his accession and a cankering malady at his death; but this undeniable defect must not blind us to the two profoundly influential conceptions which he bequeathed to his successors. War is not an accident, nor the spasmodic revelation of dynastic greed and ambition; it is a part of the science of government and inseparable from policy, because war is a necessary part of the scheme of things; it must, therefore, be studied and mastered as completely as any other science concerned with the activities of life, since government is the science of life as a whole. Secondly, the army is the state exercising an indispensable function, and must be organized and directed by the brain of the state. A ruler versed only in the civil science of life is as incompletely equipped for his duties as the militarist tyrant ignorant of everything but the science of arms.

Scharnhorst and Moltke.

Scharnhorst, the most original, attractive, and profoundly political of Prussia's military teachers, put the coping-stone on Frederick's work. Gneisenau, Clausewitz, von Roon, and Moltke only completed and carried Scharnhorst's principles to their logical conclusion. For

Scharnhorst's originality and grasp lay in the skill and insight with which he incorporated into the essentials of the Frederician system the essentials he had learned from the French Revolution. The Army Law of 1814 made the Prussian army the nation in arms, service in which is a school of citizenship. Military efficiency—the capacity in which a citizen will serve—the qualities and classes needed for officers and the higher command and direction—the organization of the brain of the army as a sub-brain of the state,—these were derivatives and specific problems for the military expert, and they were not fully solved until the epoch of von Roon, Moltke, and Blumenthal; but the character, justification, and functions of the army belonged to the political theory of the state and the place of the state in life as a whole. Scharnhorst was as convinced as Frederick that Prussia must in the broad sense be a military state, if she was to be a state at all, and if she was to be a Great Power her polity must rest on this fundamental premise.

The civil service.

The evolution of a civil service (Beamtentum) had proceeded on parallel lines with the evolution of the army, for its creation and development were the realization of similar principles of political thought and systematized action. The crushing by the Great Elector of the local estates and the tentative and gradual substitution of centralized administration for disorganized local autonomy made the drastic reforms of Frederick William I possible and inevitable. The separated territories of the Prussian kingdom became a single domain, administered by a single central directory under the sovereign's vigilant personal presidency, the orders of which were executed by

a staff, carefully graded and co-ordinated and taught to be pitilessly efficient and to owe responsibility to the head of the state alone. Frederick the Great was bred and broken into this system, which he expanded and perfected in detail, but the framework of which he was quite content to preserve unaltered. But while Frederick William I was, and preferred to remain, the skilled proprietor of a large property, determined to exact the maximum of rent that agricultural and administrative science, sharpened by inordinate toil, could produce, Frederick, without losing the advantages of efficient administration, linked up the purely domestic civil service with foreign relations and the army, and made a single brain, his own, do the higher thinking for all three. Without that brain the civil service was indeed a wonderful machine, but still a machine; and the problem for the age of Stein, when the machine had collapsed between 1786 and 1806, was not so much how to reconstruct the machine, but how, in a modern state that was converting itself into a nation in arms, to recreate, what Frederick had been, the brain of an efficient civil service, and make the state in its civil as in its military capacity independent of dynastic accidents and vicissitudes. We are too often tempted to forget that in absolutist monarchies sovereigns who are geniuses impose on their kingdoms penalties as heavy and as unpredictable as sovereigns who are spendthrifts, libertines, or charlatans.

The golden age of the civil service.

Stein and his colleagues, by the restoration of ministerial responsibility, municipal autonomy, and local devolution, only partially solved the problem. The ideal of a Prussian nation in arms under direct monarchical

rule was not completed by the ideal of a nation united in self-government—Gneisenau's triple conception of the supremacy of Prussia in its army, its science, and its constitution. Yet the reorganization of the civil service, sharing also in the invigorating national revival of the Liberation epoch, was so far effective that the golden age lies in the years from 1815–70. Prussia as a military and political power was in the bonds of Metternich, yet, for all that, the civil service was, silently and unobserved, perhaps unconsciously, preparing to make a military defeat of Austria, if that should ever come, decisive and irreparable. In an epoch when her foreign policy and international action had ceased to be specifically Prussian and to develop on an independent orbit, the civil service (the Beamtentum) was heightening and broadening the efficiency in administration which had so signally characterized the Prussia of the eighteenth century and stamped it with its real differentia in the European state system. The civil service resumed the suspended work of internal consolidation. By sheer continuity of pressure in the daily task of ordinary administration it rammed home the value of technical knowledge and the material benefits of science properly applied. It restored the prestige of the state in a generation intoxicated by the nationalist war of Liberation, and through the central organization it replaced the levers of the state machinery in the control of a sovereign encircled by expert advisers. Most striking of all, it recreated and reinforced the belief that to be German was good, but to be Prussian was better. In the mind of Junker, Liberal, Radical, or intellectual, for different reasons and with very different objects, Prussia

became the hope of the patriotic German. The Prussianization of Silesia and West Prussia under Frederick the Great is paralleled by the Prussianization of the rich Rhenish Prussia acquired in 1815. Without the civil service neither would have been possible, and the absorption of the Rhinelands within a generation is a wonderful tribute to the efficiency of the machinery employed. No less remarkable is the creation of the Zollverein, which was the work of the civil service after 1815. Through the Zollverein Austria had been signally defeated six years before Königgrätz; the victory of the Prussian tariff union banished to the limbo of shattered Utopias the dreams of the great Germany which was to include the German Confederation of 1815 in a single unitary political system under Austrian presidency; the economic expulsion of Austria from Germany was a fact in 1858, and the non-Prussian states—the south in particular—were confronted with the alternative of an economic union with its political corollaries under Prussia or economic isolation and ultimate ruin. The economic unification of Germany in 1867 preceded the political unification by four years; it synchronized with the military unification through the conventions with Bavaria, Würtemberg, and Baden, and it made the political unification under Prussian hegemony merely a question of time and of detail. Thanks to the work of the civil service Bismarck could afford to wait until his remorseless diplomacy had inspired his foes to strike the hour for the final *dénouement*. There remained after 1871 the Prussianization of the new German Empire. The instrument for this was at hand in the civil service.

Imperial legislation through the Bundesrat and the Reichstag were the necessary forms, but the conversion of national legislation into administrative fact was the task of the civil Beamtentum, whose brain was in Prussian Berlin. The organization and administration of finance, customs, post office, railways, insurance against unemployment, old age, sickness, bringing home to every German man, woman, and child the idea of the Empire as power, and as an omnipresent fact in every aspect of life, was a triumph of administrative efficiency. The sovereignty of the state machinery is the Prussian equivalent for the English Reign of Law. Organized efficiency is only possible where there is organized knowledge and a general appreciation of the value and potency of organized service. The gospel of work will be preached to deaf ears unless those who can hear have learned to value what methodized labour and disciplined brain can do. In the evolution of Prussia the significance of her schools and her universities comes not from the quantum of knowledge diffused through the various classes of the community (important as that may be), but in the intellectual standards and tests and the scale of values progressively taught to generation after generation, and in moulding the political thought of the day. The contribution of Prussia to the literature of power and imagination has not been remarkable either for distinction or originality, but the Prussian contribution to the literature of knowledge has been extraordinarily rich in its variety, volume, range, and quality. It is a contribution, too, that has come late in Prussian history, dating not from the foundation of the Academy

The Universities and Science.

of Science, but from the foundation of the University of Berlin, which steadily Prussianized the German professoriate and yoked to Prussian service the work of German science. Historical research restored and unfolded the imperial past of the German people, and with the aid of philosophy fitted the ascertained facts into a metaphysic of the universe. The conception of a historic mission of Prussia to unify Germany as the only interpretation that would satisfy the philosophy of history was the creation of Prussian historians, with the result that a working hypothesis of professors and philosophers became the figment of the schools and the accepted platitude of a nation, taught to regard itself as the selected instrument for the triumphant realization of a cosmic process. A docile and drilled vanity is an inexhaustible reservoir of national effort. Europe was Bourbonized before it was revolutionized by France. French ascendancy from the age of Louis XIV to the age of Napoleon rested more securely on the achievements of French genius and the superiority of French civilization in the spheres of imagination, ideas, literature, and activity than on French arms. The downfall of Napoleon heralded the ascendancy of German science in collaboration with racial ambition. The hegemony of Prussia in Germany was preceded by and coincided with the achievements of Prussianized German sciences which reached their zenith in the age of German unification. Through her schools and, above all, through her universities, in alliance with her army and her civil service, Prussia could claim to represent more effectively the efficiency of the German mind as the basis and motor force of a new and scientific

civilization. Bismarck, like Napoleon, might affect to despise the ink and red tape of the bureaucracy and the civil service—the animal armed with a pen—and to brand professors as ideologues, ignorant of life and obsessed with vain superstitions; but, unlike Napoleon, he knew how to exploit their science in the interest and service of Prussian primacy. *Nutrimentum spiritus*, the motto chosen by Frederick the Great for his royal library, would be no unfitting motto also for the University of Berlin, which confronts the Royal Palace and proclaims itself as the intellectual Household Guard of the Hohenzollern monarchy. Von Ranke, von Humboldt, Grimm, Ritter, Kiepert, Mommsen, Virchow, Bopp, Savigny, Du Bois-Reymond—to name but a few of those who have made that university illustrious,—what would the unification of Germany by Prussia have been without such colleagues, and what do they not stand for in the sphere of intellectual achievement? Moltke judged aright when he pronounced with the impressive brevity of the soldier that 'the victor in our wars is the schoolmaster'.

The University of Berlin.

It was in the schools and universities that the transition was triumphantly accomplished from the dream of a strong and independent Prussia to the supremacy of Prussia in Germany, and the dream of the establishment on that secure basis of the world-supremacy of the German Empire. What brain-power had accomplished, working on the plastic material furnished by the national revival that began after the catastrophe of Jena, and utilizing exceptional opportunities in the historical situation, Prussian brains could always accomplish, irrespective of fundamentally different social, economic and political

Final results.

conditions. In her schools and universities, carefully systematized and fostered like every other department of the state to do the state's work, Prussia and Germany, taught by Prussia, acquired that unreserved belief in the infallibility and invincibility of science, and in the potency of material facts and machinery, which gave a new interpretation to the belief in the state as power, the sum of organized human effort, and the realization of 'an absolutely complete ethical organism'. For Germany and the German Empire the formula and basis of all political progress would lie in the union of efficiency provided by science with the force residing in the State. The triumphs of such a future seemed to be as unlimited as the future itself.

CHAPTER II

THE ORIGINS AND TERRITORIAL FORMATION OF BRANDENBURG-PRUSSIA

The nucleus of Prussia.

THE core of the modern kingdom of Prussia is the historical electorate of Brandenburg and the duchy of East Prussia, which has given its name to the united Hohenzollern dominions. The acquisition and union of these two separate principalities laid the foundation, determined the character, and moulded the policy both of the nascent ruling house and of the expanding state. But long before members of the Hohenzollern were directly concerned with the areas lying round the lower or middle Elbe, or the dreary plain between the lower Vistula and the Pregel, Brandenburg and East Prussia had lived through a tangled and complicated existence of strife and achievement, of prosperity and power waning into anarchy and decay. If Berlin and Frankfort-on-the-Oder are Hohenzollern foundations, Danzig, Gnesen, Oliva, Marienburg, even royal Königsberg, enshrine memories, traditions and accomplished facts, of which the Hohenzollern rulers were the heirs not the authors. Brandenburg and East Prussia are not happy in having no history other than Hohenzollern history, but their chronicles, often as scanty in their produce and as misty in their atmosphere as the sandy flats of the

Havel, the Spree and the Masurian lakes, remind us profitably that as there were Hohenzollerns, powerful and numerous in Germany, before they established a Hohenzollern state, so there was a Brandenburg and an East and West Prussia before Hohenzollerns set foot in either. This is only another way of saying that the founding of a line and the establishment of a principality are very different things from the making of a state. The history of Germany from the revival of the Holy Roman Empire by Charles the Great, through the long gallery of Saxon, Hohenstaufen, Luxemburg and Habsburg emperors to the Napoleonic Confederation of the Rhine or the ramshackle Federation vamped together by the diplomatists of Vienna in 1815, is bewilderingly rich in the creation of principalities, ecclesiastical as well as secular, and in the founding of princely lines from humble or dubious origins. The surface of Germany at any epoch is a complicated mosaic of these principalities, and the series of maps in our historical atlases provides an instructive and slowly shifting kaleidoscope of their evolution, amalgamation, separation, and dissolution. Out of one alone, Brandenburg-Prussia, has a national German state been pieced together. The work, in history, of the Hohenzollerns has been—it is indisputable—the making of this state. It is not surprising, therefore, that court scribes, erudite savants or brooding philosophers, intoxicated by the march of events and inflamed by a national spirit, in itself the result rather than the cause of the process, should have persuaded themselves or compelled the facts to persuade them, that this work was from the beginning a predestined function of the dynasty. In

history, as in natural science, the most obvious and the easiest interpretations are generally the most fallacious. The attribution of a historic mission, conscious of its end, before the instrument for its realization has been forged, does worse than distort the truth. It falsifies the significance of each stage and belittles the real grandeur of the final result. Impartially interpreted Brandenburg-Prussian history and the annals of Hohenzollern rulers, like the history of the British Empire, point a finer moral. To build greater than we know—to take care of the day and let the years take care of themselves—are the rarest, the most fruitful and the most memorable of human achievements.

The origins of Brandenburg.

Modern Prussia may be said to have a similar origin to that of the modern empire of Austria. Just as the historic Austria has been evolved out of the eastern March founded in the tenth and eleventh centuries on the middle Danube to block the advance of Magyar and Slav, so did Brandenburg take its start in a March on the lower Elbe and in the lands between Elbe and Oder to hold back and absorb if possible Wend, Prussian, Lithuanian and Pole. The kernel of the subsequent Electorate of Brandenburg is the Nordmark established according to the traditional date, A. D. 928, by Duke Henry of Saxony, who figures in German history as Henry the Fowler, King Henry I who founded the line of the Saxon emperors and whose successor Otto I, the Great, revived the Holy Roman Empire of Charles the Great. The boundaries of this northern March (Nordmark) were pushed steadily eastwards from its centre at Brandenburg (Brennibor), converted into a fortress after

it had been wrested from the Wends. Its origins, therefore, as was its foundation, were Saxon; an advance guard and protective bastion of the mediaeval Saxon duchy, which must be carefully distinguished from the later Saxon electorate. But its purpose was not purely military—to protect by conquest—but to Germanize and to Christianize the non-German and pagan Wendish tribes and to provide new homes for the expanding German race of the west. The frontier history of mediaeval Germany from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries is the history of a wonderful colonizing effort on land, in which the energies of the German race were absorbed and without which the Germany of Central Europe could not have come into existence. In the struggle for the Wendish lands between Elbe and Oder the Saxon dukes and their representatives, the Margraves of the North or Brandenburg March, had, further to the east and the south-east, a powerful Slav competitor in the Christian kingdom of Poland, absorbing and converting by the sword and the gospel the lands between the Oder and the Vistula. The struggle with the Wends was bitter and protracted, and despite the foundation of two bishoprics (at Havelberg in 946 and Brandenburg in 949) the progress made by 1133 was dubious and the results achieved slight.

The Ascanian Margraves.

With 1133 came a new line, a new order and a permanent advance, for in that year the Emperor Lothair conferred the March of Brandenburg on the head of the House of Ballenstedt (in the Harz mountains), and with the advent of Albert the Bear (also called Albert the Schöne, or Fair) began the period of the Ascanian Margraves (so called from their castle Aschersleben), who ruled in

what was shortly (1157) called the Margraviate of Brandenburg until the extinction of the line with the death of Waldemar the Great in 1319. In these two centuries of effective and expanding power four points stand out in clear relief. First, there is a great extension of territory, as the Ascanian House steadily pushed its conquests eastwards. To the original North or Old March (Nord- or Altmark) were added successively the Middle March, the Vormark (Priegnitz), and the Ukermark, deriving its names from the Slavonic *ukri*. It is probable that the beginnings of Berlin date from the middle of the thirteenth century, when the districts of the Spree passed under the House of Anhalt, though the fortress of Tangermünde long remained the capital of the Margraviate. Pushing still further east, the foundation of the New March beyond the Oder, with the town of Frankfort guarding the passage of the river, broke new ground and extended the frontiers into Pomerania and towards the shores of the Baltic, while to the south-east the acquisition of Lebus and Sternberg gave a firm grip on Upper and Lower Lusatia (Lausitz). Secondly, the Christianization of the Wendish population had proceeded hand in hand with their subjection, and the slow but steady infiltration of German settlers inaugurated, if it did not complete, the Germanization of the population. Thirdly, economic and social life were gradually shaking down into the mould that stereotyped Brandenburg for many generations to come. The Wendish population became a broad base of serfdom on which were superimposed the manorial lords, Slavonic or German in origin—for the Slav lord acquired equal rights with his German compeer, a process

emphasized and aided by the absence of serious competition from a prosperous burgher life. Towns there were, but they were not, and could not be yet, centres of thriving industry. Under the Ascanian Margraves Junkertum—the rule and predominance of a noble squirearchy—was born and developed. Fourthly, the Margraves had pointed the way and acquired controversial titles for further expansion. The investiture in 1186 of Otto II with Pomerania, though it did not lead to a definitive acquisition, begins the complicated story of Brandenburg claims which was not closed until 1815, and the relations with the powerful archbishopric of Magdeburg indicated that there was a future for the fortunate in the west as well as in the east.

The Wittelsbach and Luxemburg rulers.

A century of decay and impotence as rapid as the previous advance followed the extinction of the Ascanian line. Another great German House, that of Wittelsbach, under the Emperor Lewis the Bavarian, laid hands on the Margraviate, but its hold was feeble, and the passing of the imperial crown to the House of Luxemburg ended Bavarian rule in the March in 1373, when Mark Brandenburg was perpetually united with the Bohemian crown. Henceforward it was governed by the House of Luxemburg or its lieutenants, until, in 1411, the second great chapter was begun, and a true successor to the Ascanian line was found in Frederick of Hohenzollern, Burgrave of Nuremberg. In the dismal record of mismanagement, misgovernment, loss of territory and internal anarchy which mark the period from 1319 to 1411 one event of importance stands out. In 1351, five years before the famous Golden Bull of Charles IV, the imperial

author had elevated the March of Brandenburg to the dignity of an electorate—bringing the number up to the mystic seven, four lay and three ecclesiastical. Henceforward the ruler was Kurfürst as well as Margrave, and his territories became Kur-Brandenburg, or Electoral Brandenburg. It is noticeable that the Kurmark, so created, nominally included all the lands between Elbe and Oder, as well as the Altmark to the west, but did not include the New March beyond the Oder—most probably because that New March had been pawned to the Teutonic Order (in 1402).

The Hohenzollerns.

Antiquarians of the seventeenth century, anticipating the piety and ignoring the competitive criticism of German Dryasdusts, found the origin of the Hohenzollern House in the noble House of Colonna, three centuries at least before the days of Charles the Great. And Elector Albert Achilles justified his classical name and Renaissance sympathies when he sought the Father of his House amid the ruins of burning Troy and traced to a fugitive companion of Aeneas, the founder of Rome, the blending of Greek blood with Roman nobility. But if the verifiable is our test, the stronghold of Zollern, on the southern face of the Rauhe Alp in Suabia, was the cradle of the family, and we have evidence of Counts of Zollern in 1061, to whom it was easy (apparently in 1170) to attach the epithet of High—hence Hohenzollern. It is remarkable that in this area of South-west Germany—the sun-warmed angle made by the upper Danube and the upper Rhine—should lie the first homes of three of Germany's greatest dynasties, Stauffen of the Hohenstauffen, Habsburg, and

Hohenzollern, all destined to wear imperial crowns, but only one to be the founder of a purely German state.

From their Suabian stronghold the Counts of Zollern spread out in collateral branches between Tübingen and the lake of Constance, and in 1192 we find Count Frederick established by Frederick Barbarossa as Burgrave of Nuremberg in Franconia. His younger son retained the Suabian territories and founded the Suabian branch of the House,[1] while the elder adhered to Nuremberg, to which by a happy marriage Baireuth was added (1248), while the Burgraviate was made hereditary in his family (1273). Culmbach may have fallen in earlier, but in 1332 Ansbach (Onolzbach) and in 1341 Plassenburg were acquired, and in 1363 the Burgrave was raised, for services to the Emperor, to the rank of an imperial prince (Reichsfürst). The division of this expanding principality into the two parts of Ansbach and Baireuth was temporarily ended by Burgrave Frederick VI, to whom in 1411 the Emperor Sigismund for his assistance in winning the imperial crown, more particularly for the solid advance of money, pledged the vicar-generalship of the harassed and impoverished March of Brandenburg. Four years later, in 1415, the bargain was terminated by the impecunious Emperor. Frederick was given the full electoral dignity, and with the formal investiture on April 17, 1417, the sixth Burgrave of Nuremberg steps into history as Frederick I, first Hohenzollern Elector of Brandenburg.

Prussia. The year 1411 was therefore a critical date both in

[1] See note A at the end of the chapter.

the annals of Brandenburg and of the Hohenzollerns. It was, curiously enough, no less critical in the annals of Prussia with which the new elector had no connexion, but from which, a century later, his descendants were to inherit, as he had inherited in Brandenburg, the work and achievements of Teutonic pioneers. Prussia, like Brandenburg, had already for three hundred years been a field of Germanic colonization, absorption and Christianization. The sandy plain between the Vistula and the Pregel, silted on its seaside by the Baltic into numerous Haffs, or estuaries, blocked by stretches of trackless forests and pitted by innumerable marshes and lakes, was the home of a pagan Slavonic tribe—the Prussians—which had much in common with the Lithuanians who spread over the plain beyond the Niemen and the Bug. Isolated by nature, savage and stubborn by race, they saw in the Dane who fared over the sea for amber, in the Pomeranian to the west and the Pole to the south, a common foe who would rob them of their independence and their primitive heathendom. Neither missionaries, such as the martyr St. Adalbert (997), nor the Cistercian monk Christian from Oliva, near Danzig, nor a papal crusade (1228), had succeeded in making any lasting impression. Doubtless the Pole in time would absorb this inhospitable land, which would bring him to the shores of the Baltic and confer control of the great artery, the Vistula, round which the Polish kingdom was built up, but if Prussia was to be won for the German branch of the Catholic Church and for German civilization the sword must first cut the way through the forests; and the foundation by a Bishop of Riga of the

Order of the Sword, which achieved the conversion of Livonia, pointed a plain moral.

The Teutonic Order.

To the Teutonic Order of knights, established in 1190, belonged the honour of anticipating and frustrating Polish ambitions and of establishing in a conquered and converted Prussia an ecclesiastical and military state of a unique type. The High Master of the Order, Hermann von Salza, a Prince of the Empire, whose ambitions had the sweep of the imperial black eagle, which he added to the black cross of the Order, listened to the cry that came from the Polish fief of Culmland (1226), the one corner of the land that had been effectively wrested by German priests from heathendom, and diverted the energies of the knights, whose central seat was at Acre, to the forests and marshes of Prussia. He had secured alike from Emperor and from Pope the pledge that the Order should be invested with all the lands won to Christianity and German civilization. In 1231 the knights set foot in Prussia, and a fierce struggle began which lasted for a century, and in which the resistance of the Prussian was finally broken. The foundation of Königsberg in 1255, the removal of the head-quarters of the Order from Venice to Marienburg (1309)—the fortress of their Divine patroness—the absorption of Pomerellen and the culminating acquisition of Danzig (1311), are eloquent of the grip with which the Teutonic knights held what the sword had given them.

Prussia in the fourteenth century.

If the fourteenth century had witnessed the decay of Brandenburg it was the golden age of the Teutonic knights in Prussia. Behind the military crusader had pressed the German colonist and the German trader, no

less anxious than the German priest to make good what the strong hand of the High Master, enthroned at Marienburg, could guarantee. The Order carved out bishoprics with papal approval, and made them subject to the authority of the High Master; it founded monasteries and convents and schools subject to its discipline; it established towns where, under the supremacy of its chief, trade was promoted and municipal rights were granted to the burghers; it allied itself to the Hanseatic League, and thereby made itself a commercial and maritime power along the shores of the Baltic; it offered to the chivalry of all nations a field of adventure and fame, no less than of prowess for the greater glory of God and His Church. The English Henry of Derby was one of the many whose sword had flashed in the fabled 'land of spruce'. But, solid and memorable as were these achievements, there were two things which the Teutonic Order could not secure. They could not keep the wonderful combination of the military spirit and the religious ideal at the flaming purity which had brought them from Culmland to Memel, Königsberg, Marienburg, and Danzig. They had won Prussia for a German Church and a German civilization, but they could not check or extinguish Polish nationalism which lay all round them. The renascence of the Polish kingdom under the Jagellon dynasty meant that Poland would challenge the title of the Teutonic Order to be masters in a land that shut the Pole from the Baltic. The First Peace of Thorn (1411) that followed the crushing and indisputable Polish victory at Tannenberg (1410) was delusive. The Order was confirmed in its territories, save Samogitia. In reality

BRANDENBURG
IN
1415
BALTIC SEA
Heligoland
Kiel
Colberg
Danzig
Tilsit
Königsberg
Lubeck
Stralsund
Hamburg
Bremen
MECKLENBURG
Stettin
FRIESLAND
DUCHY
OF
LÜNEBURG
ALTMARK
NEW MARK
(Pawned to Teutonic Order)
Thorn
Warsaw
KINGDOM
OF
POLAND
MÜNSTER
Hanover
MITTEL
MARK
Berlin
R. Oder
Münster
BRABANT
R. Rhine
ELECTORATE OF SAXONY
LAUSITZ
DUCHY OF SILESIA
Breslau
Göttingen
Leipzig
Cologne
Aachen
HESSEN
Erfurt
Dresden
Jena
R. Vistula
FRANCE
Coblenz
Mainz
Frankfurt
K. OF
Prague
Treves
BAYREUTH
Bamberg
BOHEMIA
R. Meuse
Worms
R. Main
Nüremberg
R. Moldau
Austerlitz
Rastadt
ANSBACH
D OF
Strassburg
Baden
Stuttgart
R. Danube
D OF
Wagram
Ulm
BAVARIA
Vienna
Pressburg
HOHENZOLLERN
Munich
AUSTRIA
Salzburg
Basel
STYRIA

Tannenberg had sounded the knell of its prosperity and power. What it could not hold by the sword it was not likely it would hold by the pen. Victorious Poland bided its time, and time was against a declining Order.

Brandenburg under Frederick I.

The new elector of Brandenburg, Frederick I, scholar, soldier, and administrator, doubtless heard of these happenings and reflected on them, for to a prince and an elector, in *flagranti Caesaris gratia* the defeat of the Teutonic knights, whose fame, splendour, and authority filled the Europe of the west, raised obstinate questionings; but his immediate task was how to secure and hold the electorate with which he had been invested. The land had suffered terribly from the devastations of the Hussite soldiery, and the native nobility for two generations had given full rein to their irrepressible turbulence and determination to suffer no law but their anarchic right to do as they pleased. The substitution of a strong master, no mere soldier of fortune, but a prince, with the solid resources of Baireuth, Ansbach, and Nuremberg at his disposal, for the shadowy and intermittent power of impecunious imperial lieutenants from Bohemia or Moravia, was not to be tolerated without violent resistance. 'It might rain electors on the March,' it was said, but that would make no difference, and Quitzows, Rochows, Putlitzes, and Holtzendorfs jeered at the rule of 'a toy from Nuremberg'. But 'the toy from Nuremberg' was no less in earnest. He isolated the rebels from their allies and his greedy neighbours—the Archbishop of Magdeburg, the Dukes of Saxony and Pomerania; he placed the towns under his protection and confirmed their privileges, and, most effective of all, he took the field, defeated the

rebels, and battered down their fortresses and strongholds. It was a contest of endurance, and force was on the side of the elector—force with the aid of nascent science. We read that Frederick brought the new invention of cannon and gunpowder into the struggle, and tradition, always picturesque, handed to the next generation the marvels of 'Heavy Peg', the big gun which had shattered the chief castles of the Quitzows at Freisack. In four years, by 1421, the elector could feel that he was really master in his new house. But, apart from this, his main activities were elsewhere. Baireuth and Nuremberg were his home —he was a Franconian and South German, who had not foreseen that in the bleaker north lay the fortunes of his line, and that the electoral dominions were more important than the electoral dignity. His soldiership is evinced by the part he played in the Hussite wars; his ambitions are revealed by his desire to acquire Saxony as well as Brandenburg, and his readiness to be a candidate for the imperial crown—the first but not the last occasion on which Hohenzollern came into conflict with Habsburg —and his horoscope of the future, as well as his share in the prevailing vice of German princes, the partition of his territories, are defined in his will, accepted in 1438 by a Diet of the estates at Tangermünde. The authenticity of the document is not unimpeachable, and a later generation may have invented or exaggerated the unselfishness of the co-heir in refusing to execute all its provisions, but the fact remains that Baireuth and the Franconian lands went to the elder son John, called 'The Alchemist' from his interest in chemistry, while the electoral dominion, clearly considered secondary in importance,

fell to the second son Frederick II. The Hohenzollern possessions were thus split in two with every prospect of further subdivision in the future.

The electors, 1440–1619.

Between 1440, the year of Frederick's death, and 1619, when the period of territorial formation reaches a well-marked stage, nine electors ruled in Brandenburg. They were, almost without exception, men of sound capacity, eminently practical, patient, and industrious, but no single one of them reached the first rank in German still less European history. Germany, on Frederick's death, was on the eve of the Renaissance, and the Reformation, with its intellectual and economic dislocation, its profound and permanent revolution of the political conditions, was at hand. The year of Frederick's death saw Frederick III of the Habsburg line elected to the imperial crown, and with that election, in which the Hohenzollern elector had concurred, began the predominance of the House of Austria. The empire virtually became an hereditary monarchy for three centuries in the Habsburg dynasty. The heroic or decisive personalities in the Germany of Erasmus, Luther, Charles V, and Maurice of Saxony are to be found elsewhere than in Brandenburg, and neither the Hohenzollern electors nor their dominions can be proved to have contributed the capital formative forces that moulded thought or action between the days of Hus and the opening of the Thirty Years' War. It is not, indeed, until the Great Elector that Brandenburg produces a really Great man.

Brandenburg history, 1440–1618.

The interest and significance of this lengthy tract in Brandenburg history are clearly not to be found in a jejune epitome of facts, arranged in chronological blocks labelled

with an elector's name, but in summarizing and estimating the character and variety of the elements that, with the help of time, were built into a principality of the second or third rank. The dynastic thread unmistakably runs through this slow evolution. Not once, but repeatedly, a critical turn which must be carefully noted is given by the personal policy of the ruler, and as we study this century and a half the impressive feature is not the brilliance of this or that elector, but the fidelity to attainable ends, the continuity of effort, and the steady growth of ambition in a succession of rulers, politically mediocre.

The dangers of Brandenburg.

In 1440 Brandenburg was confronted with two very real dangers, more markedly perhaps than most German principalities: the danger of partition from within, which wrecked the promising beginnings of so many German ruling families; the pressure of powerful and hungry neighbours from without. The danger of partition was emphasized in the fifteenth century by the greater importance attached at first to the Franconian possessions, compared with the electorate; and as effective political union between Baireuth, Nuremberg, and Brandenburg was difficult, if not impossible, the first condition of a real future for Brandenburg lay in its definitive severance from the south, and in the establishment of rulers with a monopoly of interest in an indivisible principality between Elbe and Oder. An electorate regarded simply as an appanage or an appendage to Baireuth would either dwindle, or be carved into dynastic fragments, and perhaps be finally abandoned. This danger was peremptorily averted by

the notable *Dispositio Achillea* (1473) made by Elector Albert Achilles (1471–86). By this instrument the principle of primogeniture was introduced into both the Franconian and Brandenburg territories. The Kurmark was to pass undivided to the eldest son, and alienation was forbidden. Ansbach and Baireuth were separated from Brandenburg, and divided into two, and not more than two, principalities, in each of which the principle of primogeniture was ordained. In default of male issue to any two of the rulers of the March, Ansbach, or Baireuth, the heir to the third was to unite all three under his rule. By assigning the electorate to his eldest son, and Ansbach and Baireuth to the younger sons, Elector Albert Achilles clearly indicated the reversal of his father's preference for Franconia. Brandenburg was thereby made the central possession of the House to the maintenance of which all else was secondary, and the main line was converted by this stroke of the testamentary pen into a northern dynasty whose future lay in lands watered not by the Main, but by the Elbe, the Spree, and the Oder. It was a momentous act, the full significance of which could not be seen in 1473. But even if the *Dispositio Achillea* was not strictly maintained, its chief provision, the integrity of the electoral March, was loyally observed, and *The Agreement of Gera* (1598) confirmed and extended its principles. Once again primogeniture and inalienability were declared to be 'House Law' of Kur-Brandenburg. Ansbach and Baireuth were to be the appanages of cadet lines and the reversionary rights of the *Dispositio Achillea* were repeated.[1] The further provision that the

The *Dispositio Achillea*, 1473.

The Agreement of Gera, 1598.

[1] See note B at the end of this chapter.

duchy of Prussia, if it fell in, was to be indissolubly attached to the electorate and subject to the same inalienability, shows that the lesson of territorial integrity had been fully mastered. Henceforward, disaster from without alone would mutilate or diminish the elector's dominions. The Hohenzollerns had safeguarded themselves against marital or parental weakness—as insidious a danger as political folly, and the more likely to occur because human nature is constant and human wisdom intermittent in its action. They had implicitly laid down an identification between the ruler and his territories. The elector was Brandenburg—he hoped in 1598 to be Brandenburg-Prussia. We shall see that steps were also being cautiously taken to ensure that Brandenburg was the elector.

Territorial expansion.

The second danger lay in the geographical configuration and situation. The electorate had no adequate frontiers. The Altmark lay west of the Elbe and its boundaries were purely political and arbitrary. Even if the Oder to the east provided a frontier, the existence of the New March pawned in 1402 forbade acquiescence in the Oder line. Due south lay Saxony, Lusatia, and Silesia, due north Mecklenburg and North-East Pomerania and Stettin—the frontiers of which were also political and arbitrary. Brandenburg could not stand still in a world of ringing changes, when faiths were decaying and being reborn, ecclesiastical domains dissolving into the secular arm, princely houses rising and falling in the clash of wars of religion. She must either absorb her neighbours or her neighbours would absorb her. And for inland states penetrated by two such great rivers as Elbe and Oder

there is always the call of the sea. To push down the Elbe and the Oder, to secure the territory between them, to get a footing on salt water—what more natural? For the rivers were roads and river-gates meant tariffs, tolls, towns with fat burghers, traders and the traders' friends across the seas. Expansion might be won in a single generation by big strokes and the great captain's throw of the iron dice, or it might be won in a series of generations by persistent and successive nibbling, aided by the Heritage-Fraternities (*Erbverbrüderungen*) which were the bills of exchange in the diplomatic currency of ambitious but timid German princes. The Hohenzollern Electors were not great captains nor great gamblers, even in the Germany of Charles V and Ferdinand I, which offered such a rare temptation and such unique chances to the gambling or the strokes of genius. They seemed to have taken the measure of their own capacity. They nibbled and they negotiated. They also married or gave in marriage, with prudence and foresight, and they won the reward of nibbling, negotiating, and marrying in the right way.

Acquisition of territories.

The record of acquisition is prosaic but continuous. Elector Frederick II added Lychen and Himmelpfort (1442), Kottbus and Peitz (1445), Wernigerode (1449), and redeemed the New March from the Teutonic Order in 1455. Elector Albert Achilles acquired Schwedt, Löcknitz and Vierraden (1472), Garz (1479), Krossen, Züllichau, Sommerfeld and Bobersberg (1482); Elector John Cicero added Zossen (1490); Joachim I Ruppin (1524), Joachim II the secularized bishoprics of Brandenburg, Havelberg and Lebus (1548), and John George

Buskow and Storkow (1571). To this list must be added three 'Heritage-Fraternities'—the first (in 1442), secured a right of succession in Mecklenburg, the second (Convention of Grimnitz in 1529, ratified afresh in 1571) with Pomerania by which, failing heirs to the ducal line, Kur-Brandenburg was to inherit all Pomerania, with a similar reversion to Pomerania if heirs failed to Brandenburg. This instrument, reviving the aspirations of the Ascanian Margraves, became the basis of Prussian claims on Pomerania. The third (dating from 1537) was with the Duke of Liegnitz founding a similar claim to Liegnitz, Wohlau, and Brieg in Silesia. Though it was cancelled by the Emperor Ferdinand I, the validity of the cancellation was strenuously denied by the Brandenburg electors. Two hundred years later Frederick II revived the musty claim and skilfully coupled it with equally musty and still more dubious pretensions to Jägerndorf, which in 1524 had been purchased by the Ansbach Margraves, and had been forfeited in 1620.

Elector John Sigismund.

To Elector John Sigismund (1608–19) fell the honour of extending his dominions in lands both to the east and to the west, and thereby altered the whole outlook of the Hohenzollern rulers. Both in the case of Prussia and in the complicated dispute over the succession to Cleves-Jülich John Sigismund reaped what his predecessors had so patiently sown and fostered. The absence of conquest by the sword is a remarkable feature of the first two centuries of Brandenburg expansion.

Prussia, 1411–1511.

After the First Peace of Thorn the Order of Teutonic knights fell on evil days. The towns, headed by Danzig, revolted from its authority and placed themselves under

the crown of Poland, and the High Master was driven from Marienburg. A second Tannenberg was not necessary to compel the acceptance of the Second or Perpetual Peace of Thorn (1466), whose provisions settled the fate of Prussia for three centuries. The land was divided into two parts. The eastern half, with Königsberg, was conceded as a Polish fief to the Teutonic Order; the western half, called Royal Prussia, which included Danzig, Elbing, Marienburg, Culmland and the bishopric of Ermeland, was absorbed into the kingdom of Poland, which thus secured the whole of the lower Vistula, from Thorn to its mouth, and an incomparable foothold on the Baltic. It was a melancholy end to the dreams of Hermann von Salza, and the heroic souls of the fourteenth century. The best half of what German soldier, priest, missionary and trader had won had passed to the Pole, who thrust a solid wedge of Slav territory between the eastern half, nominally still German, and the Germany of the basin of the Oder. Over the glories of Marienburg, the wealth of Danzig, and the fortress of Thorn, guarding the superb sweep of the Vistula, no longer flew the black cross with the imperial eagle, and if East Prussia, held by a moribund order, was still to be saved for the German tongue it must be by aid from without, not by the ebbing strength within. A High Master, elected from some princely house, might perhaps furnish such aid. It is a tribute to the position of the Hohenzollerns that in 1511 Albert, Margrave of Ansbach, and a nephew through his mother to King Sigismund of Poland, was chosen to sit in the chair of Hermann von Salza.

The Hohenzollerns and Prussia.

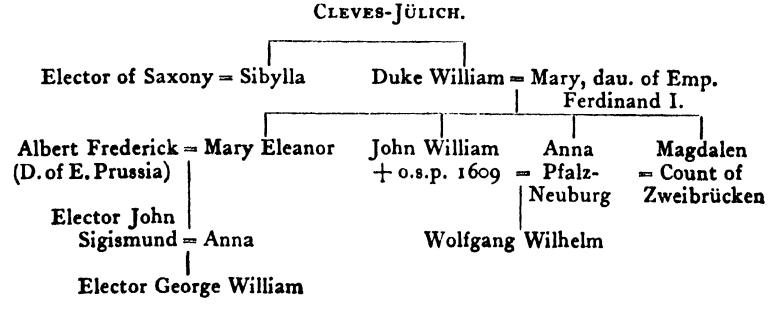
If High Master Albert was expected to save the Teutonic Order and East Prussia from Polish absorption he succeeded in the latter but not in the former, and in the most surprising way. Self-interest bade him shake off Polish suzerainty; the Pope bade him meet the just criticism of Luther and the Lutherans and reform the decadent Order. Albert failed to win independence from the Polish king, but he met the criticism of Luther by adopting Luther's advice to take a wife, secularize the Order, and turn its lands into a Lutheranized and lay duchy. In 1525 he married a daughter of the king of Denmark, and was invested by the king of Poland with the secularized duchy of East Prussia. Here, indeed, was a new Hohenzollern estate, and his relatives in Kur-Brandenburg were quick to see their chance. In 1569, after the death of Duke Albert, Elector Joachim II succeeded in securing co-infeoffment (*Mitbelehnung*) for himself and his heirs during the minority of the young Duke Albert Frederick. To make assurance doubly sure the elector married one sister, and his son, Elector John Sigismund, another sister of the duke, whose imbecility rapidly developed into insanity. In 1605 Elector Joachim became regent, and finally (in 1618), after much bargaining with Poland, Elector John Sigismund was invested with the duchy, under Polish suzerainty. At once the compact of Gera became operative, and East Prussia was indissolubly united with the electorate. It was an unwilling union on the side of Prussia. The new elector-duke was a Calvinist, hateful therefore to the Lutherans and to the Roman Catholics. The Prussian nobility, like the Brandenburg Junkertum of the fifteenth century,

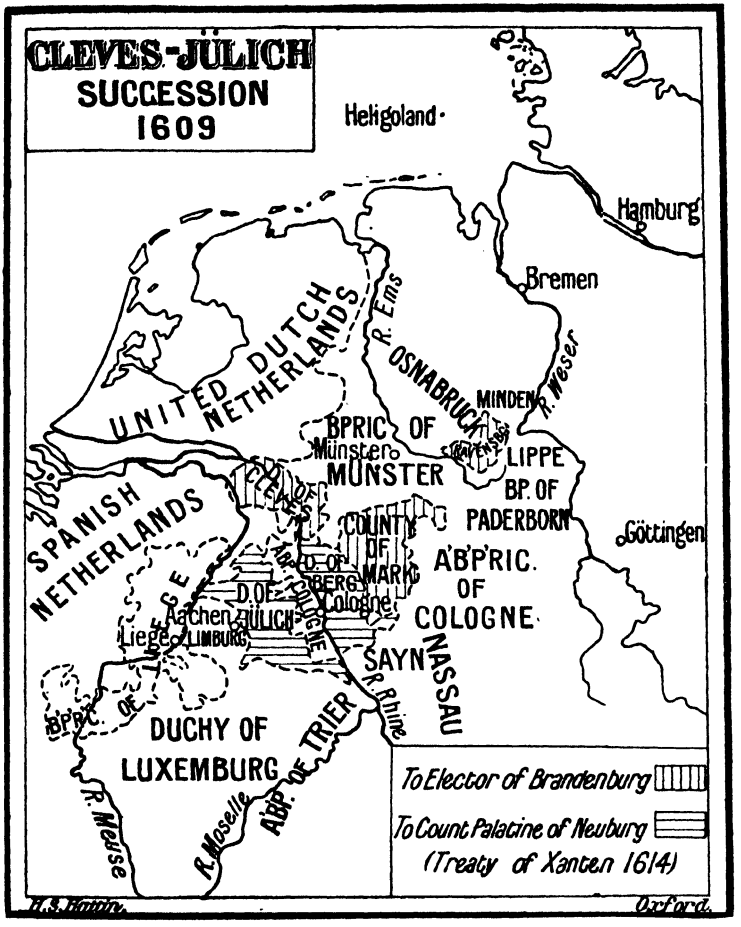
did not relish the idea of a new and real master. With the Hohenzollerns the Prussians had a slender personal link in an apostate duke and his insane son, but with Electoral Brandenburg they had nothing in common. It was a foreign dynasty, alien in religion, institutions, and ideas. The elector would govern them from Berlin and would drag them from their isolation in the north-east corner of Europe into the vortex of German politics. They were, therefore, prepared to resist, with the aid of Poland, and resist they did. For many a long day the hold of the electors on the duchy was extremely precarious, and amid such inauspicious beginnings what was to prove the most loyal and docile of Hohenzollern possessions, the core and flower of Hohenzollern autocracy, passed under electoral rule.

The Cleves-Jülich succession.

Elector John Sigismund, by his death in 1619, was spared a peck of troubles, some of which he had unnecessarily made for himself. He bequeathed to his heir a complicated dispute, which involved valuable territories on the Rhine. The Cleves-Jülich-Berg succession question is a formidable rival to the Schleswig-Holstein question four centuries later in its genealogical conundrums, the number of the claimants, the strategic value of the territories in dispute, the fruitless appeals to an unascertainable public law, the list of unobserved or violated agreements, the gravity of the European issue at stake, the inexhaustible elasticity of conscience in every one concerned, and the final settlement by the sword. The ducal territories of Cleves, Jülich, Mark, Ravensberg, Ravenstein, and Berg, lay in a rich industrial ring round the lower Rhine where it

crosses into the territories of the United Netherlands. Its position, therefore, affected not only the Dutch, but the Spanish Habsburgs, the Bourbon monarchy, and North-west Germany, and gave the dukes a miniature but embarrassing 'Wacht am Rhein'. Furthermore the balance of religious power would be upset according as a Catholic or a Protestant held the territories. Sooner or later dukes who rule in revolutionary crises over territories of prime strategical importance make their contribution to the situation by dying without male heirs, but leaving numerous sisters and aunts with husbands and sons scattered through the ruling houses of Europe. Duke John William of Cleves, who died in 1609, was no exception.[1] He left no son, but he had three sisters, and he was himself the son of an imperial Habsburg mother. The main claimants were four: the Emperor because it was a vacant imperial fief, and his aunt had been duchess of Cleves; Pfalz-Neuburg because he had married sister Anna and she was still living; the elector of Saxony because of his mother, Sibylla of Cleves; and Elector John Sigismund of Brandenburg.


CLEVES-JÜLICH.
Elector of Saxony = Sibylla
Duke William = Mary, dau. of Emp. Ferdinand I.
Albert Frederick (D. of E. Prussia) = Mary Eleanor
John William + o.s.p. 1609
Anna = Pfalz-Neuburg
Magdalen = Count of Zweibrücken
Elector John Sigismund = Anna
Wolfgang Wilhelm
Elector George William


CLEVES-JÜLICH
SUCCESSION
1609
Heligoland
Hamburg
Bremen
R. Ems
R. Weser
UNITED DUTCH NETHERLANDS
OSNABRUCK
MINDEN
BPRIC OF
Münster
MUNSTER
LIPPE
BP. OF
PADERBORN
Göttingen
SPANISH NETHERLANDS
COUNTY OF MARK
A'B'PRIC. OF COLOGNE
D. OF BERG
Cologne
D. OF JÜLICH
Aachen
Liege
LIMBURG
SAYN
NASSAU
R. Rhine
BP'RIC OF
DUCHY OF LUXEMBURG
ABP. OF TRIER
R. Meuse
R. Moselle
To Elector of Brandenburg
To Count Palatine of Neuburg
(Treaty of Xanten 1614)
H.S. Hawkins.
Oxford.

The elector of Brandenburg's claims were certainly strong. The will of the late duke was on his side, and the insane Duke Albert Frederick had not only left him East Prussia, but through his marriage with Mary Eleanor of Cleves his daughter, Anna, John Sigismund's wife, had inherited the claim of the eldest sister of Duke John William to the undivided territories. Mary Eleanor's other daughter had been the wife of John Sigismund's father, so that father and son together represented a double claim. The Hohenzollerns, in short, had barricaded themselves with titles through the female line, the only legal titles possible under the circumstances, until religion intervened. The elector and Pfalz-Neuburg, the other chief claimant, were Protestants, and both wanted the whole, not a partition nor joint dominion. To secure militant Roman Catholic support Pfalz-Neuburg left the Protestant fold and became a Roman Catholic; to secure militant Protestant support John Sigismund became a Calvinist, and the Cleves-Jülich question was transformed and blended (1613) into the mighty issues that shortly became the Thirty Years' War. The treaty of Xanten (1614) simply marked a stage when it provisionally assigned Jülich and Berg to Pfalz-Neuburg and the remainder to John Sigismund. It was not until 1666, after many vicissitudes, that a final settlement was reached by which Cleves, Mark, and Ravenstein, came into the effective possession of the Great Elector and the Hohenzollerns were actually seated in Rhenish territories. Until that date their title was more one of right than of fact, and the tripartite character of Brandenburg-Prussia existed on paper and on the map rather than in reality.

And in 1619 it was more than doubtful whether the framework that dynastic policy had braized together was sufficiently strong to stand the tempest sweeping from the Baltic to Paris, from Bavaria and Bohemia to the capital of Gustavus Adolphus at Stockholm.

The Reformation in the electorate.

Religion, as we have seen, had played no small part in the personal life and ambitions of the electors, but the Reformation of the sixteenth century had also remoulded the structure and character of the electorate, and proved a new formative force in the life of the Brandenburgers. The advance of the Reformed religion did not, however, come from the electoral court. Joachim I (1499–1535), whose brother was cardinal-archbishop both of Mainz and Magdeburg, held to the old faith and was opposed to the secularization of the Teutonic Order. His successor, Joachim II (1535–6), made no efforts to stem the steady Lutheranization of his electorate, and at first gave political support to the Emperor Charles V. But the feeling of his subjects was too strong, and he swung over to the side of Protestant Saxony and Hesse, and after the Peace of Augsburg (1555) carried through a drastic reorganization of his territories. The three episcopal sees—Lebus, Havelberg, and Brandenburg—were secularized, and their administration appropriated to the elector, while Lutheranism became the religion both of the court and the electorate. Furthermore, through his grandson, Joachim Frederick (elector 1598–1608), the administration and reformation of the great see of Magdeburg passed into Hohenzollern hands—constituting a political claim on the territories of the archiepiscopate not forgotten by the Great Elector in 1648. The branches

of the House at Ansbach and Baireuth had much earlier become Protestants, so that by the end of the sixteenth century alike in Brandenburg, Franconia, and East Prussia the Hohenzollerns were powerful allies of political Protestantism. The subsequent conversion of Elector John Sigismund to Calvinism gave deep offence to the preponderant Lutheranism of Brandenburg and East Prussia, which obstinately refused to follow the lead of their lord. It had, however, one striking result. As Calvinists the electors, after 1608, were in a hopeless minority, and they early learned the necessity and value of toleration. In the making of the Prussian state it is easy to see, but it is difficult to define, measure, or exaggerate the profound influence exercised by the tolerant régime of its rulers. The House of Hohenzollern intuitively and empirically at first, but finally as a matter of deliberate political policy and principle of state action, came to stand for the noblest side of Protestantism—that truth and the moral conscience are not weakened but strengthened by the free inquiry of man's spirit, that human reason has its rights and duties, that civic loyalty, the authority of the rulers and the duty of service to the state, are compatible with and independent of differences in religious faith.

The results of the Reformation.

The immediate results of the Reformation can be traced in three directions. First, Brandenburg had hitherto broadly followed with benefit to itself a policy of co-operation with the Emperor. The House of Habsburg, however, remained Roman Catholic and the avowed champion of the Counter-Reformation. By 1608 it was clear that the struggle for religious supremacy

could not be averted, and that the destinies of Germany and every German principality would be remade by the issue of the tremendous contest which broke out in 1618. In the purely political sphere the electors were confronted with a cruel dilemma. Was it possible to combine loyalty to the Empire with loyalty to Brandenburg? Secondly, Brandenburg, from its geographical position, could not evade a decision. It was surrounded by Protestant states, and its nearest and most powerful neighbour, Saxony, was politically the most important Lutheran principality in Germany. The Cleves-Jülich question had plunged the electors into the centre of the European contest: and in Lutheran Prussia they were now a Baltic power, hemmed in by Catholic Poland, but looking across the sea to an ambitious and Protestant Denmark and a still more ambitious and Protestant Sweden. Was the Baltic to become a Protestant lake? Elector John Sigismund left the problem and Brandenburg's share in it to his successor. Thirdly, as a purely internal matter, the Reformation had greatly strengthened electoral authority. Secularization and disendowment increased the resources of the elector and removed the concurrent and competitive independence of the old Church. Even under the old order the electors had claimed and exercised an authority in the ecclesiastical sphere which had given them a remarkable power both in the bishoprics and in the monastic houses. But, with Lutheranism firmly established in Church and State, the elector became *summus episcopus* and concentrated in his hands the supreme administrative and ecclesiastical direction. Ecclesiastical change had therefore worked towards the same result as

the secular policy of the electors since the memorable struggle of Frederick I with his rebel Junkers.

Internal administration.

The most noticeable feature of the internal development during this period is the growth in the administrative rights of the manorial landlord, the steady degradation of the peasantry into an economic serfhood, the decline in the local privileges of the towns, and the waning of the power of the estates in the united Landtag or Diet. Theoretically, the estates, which were the representatives of a feudally organized society—nobles, town, and agrarian communities—exercised a concurrent authority with the elector in administration and legislation, and there are repeated examples up to the middle of the sixteenth century of their right and wish to intervene, and to compel the elector to work hand in hand with them. The power of the purse in particular provided a formidable weapon, which gave them a real voice in policy. But the introduction of Roman law by Elector Joachim I (1499–1535), and the foundation at Berlin of a central Electoral Cameral Tribunal (*Kurkammergericht*), which created new judicial machinery under the control of the executive, still more the establishment of a council of state (*Staatsrat*) by Elector Joachim Frederick (1598–1608)—a privy council of nine, co-ordinating the administration, which was intended to be the chief organ both of policy and executive action under the elector's presidency—together with the growing practice of delegating the power of the Diet to a central committee—point to a principle, steadily pursued, of freeing electoral authority from 'parliamentary' control. So important has the creation of the

privy council been considered that some writers have seen in it the origin and nucleus of the modern Prussian centralized administrative bureaucracy. But this is almost certainly an exaggeration. As an organ of deliberation and administration the privy council was a substitute for and a rival to the Landtag rather than a centralization of the executive or an extension of administrative machinery. The electors undertook to govern by and with the advice of their new Staatsrat, and thereby probably intended to shelve and supersede the tiresome interference of a representative Diet. The Staatsrat, then, can be more truly regarded as a preliminary stage which made 'bureaucracy' possible, but by no means either inevitable or even contemplated in 1618. It simply made the next stage—the crushing of the estates—easier.

So far the authority of the elector was securely based on his position as a feudal and manorial lord. The elector was the largest 'landlord' in his dominions; secularization and disendowment steadily increased his landed property, from the profits of which his electoral or 'state' income was mainly derived. Like other mediaeval princes, the elector was expected to 'live on his own', and his patrimonial and seigneurial rights and jurisdiction were really independent of his rights *qua* elector. Two points are worth noting in this connexion. The slow establishment of autocracy in the seventeenth century meant that the electors strove to make their political authority correspond with their feudal authority, to become in the 'state' and over all their subjects what they already were indisputably on their electoral manors

and demesnes, over the agricultural tenants of all classes, the source and organ of power—to become in fact 'Landesherr' (lord of the land), 'land' meaning their political territories as a whole, and not merely a manorial demesne. Secondly, the growing alliance between the nobility and the electors was stimulated by the position of both. The electors necessarily had a profound sympathy with patrimonial jurisdiction; the nobles in their manors were what the elector was in his; electors and nobles had, therefore, a common cause, and once the nobles frankly accepted the political overlordship of the elector his strength was their strength. They could work in harmony together for common objects, common principles, and a common conception of life. The nobles became the bulwark of the 'throne', the 'throne' the protector of the nobles. A dissolution of the feudal organization of society involved disaster for both. For the elector it meant also the disappearance of two-thirds of his revenue and complete dependence on taxation as a voluntary gift, with all the machinery for imposing and collecting it. Hence the ideal of the electors came to be the government and administration of the whole of their territories as one large, indivisible, and unified estate, to break down every obstacle, whatever its title, that prevented the realization of this ideal, and to grade and maintain society in classes, carefully correlated to the authority and rights of the supreme 'Landesherr', and thereby to establish a complete polity, self-contained and a model of its kind. Such an ideal obviously implied direct personal government; but it also demanded efficiency. It could only be brought into existence gradually, and if the rulers in succession

proved equal to their task. As early as 1618 incompetence in the elector's chair might mean disaster. So far the electors had proved competent. The seventeenth century was to be the touchstone of the dynasty. But the whole situation was governed by the character of the territorial state which 1618 saw completed. Both Brandenburg and East Prussia were essentially agricultural domains, and poor agricultural domains. Compared with the rich centre and south of Germany they were backward in development, civilization, and industrial life. Soil, climate, forests, marshes, demanded of the inhabitants, scanty in number, a fierce and unending struggle with obstinate conditions. In the evolution of the Brandenburg-Prussian type and character it is difficult to disentangle or allot the respective shares of race and environment. Generalization is fatally easy, but as difficult to refute as to verify. German and Wend, Prussian, Slav, Lett were blended together; immigration was continuous, and on to the original blend were grafted Dutch, Huguenot, and Protestant from the south, even Scandinavian and Finn. The gospel of work, discipline, and efficiency was burnt into the souls and fibres of this racial amalgam by sun, wind, mist, and a bitter soil, before that gospel became a state policy imposed in the interests of the community. We can trace in the evolution of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the slow and expanding consciousness of a relentless belief, alike in the electors and their subjects, noble or serf—that they were of the North northy, that they could make the North and the North could make them. German they might be, Protestant they might be, but they were first and

foremost Prussians. History, nature, and God had made them different from other German races and German states. Instinct stiffened into a tribal consciousness; the tribal consciousness took root as a racial memory and tradition, and became the faith and inspiration of a nation. Success added the final element—the conviction of superiority. The alliance of electors and nobility, with common prejudices, superstitions, and convictions, made indeed the political framework of Brandenburg-Prussia. But it achieved a still more enduring result. It made the Prussian soul.

Note A. The Suabian branch was definitely separated from the Franconian in 1227, and in 1529 acquired the countships of Sigmaringen and Vöhringen, which in 1605 split into the two divisions of Hohenzollern-Hechingen and Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, raised to the rank of princedoms of the Empire in 1623 and 1638 respectively. Finally in 1849 both principalities were ceded to the King of Prussia, the status of younger sons of the Royal House being granted to the princes.

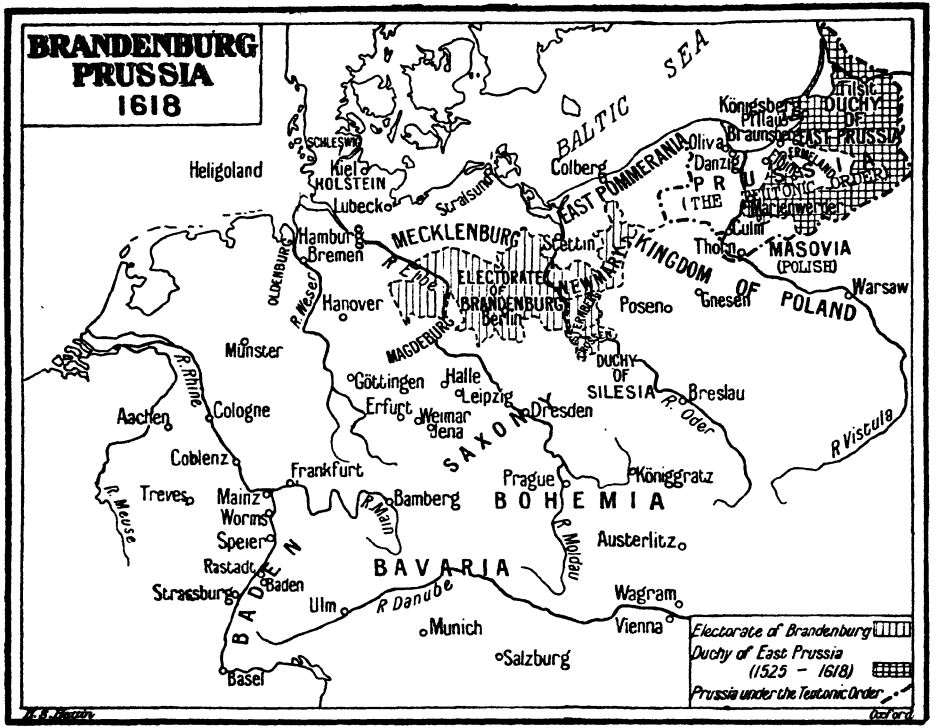
Note B. From the *Dispositio Achillea* and the Agreement of Gera sprang the elder and younger Culmbach lines of the Hohenzollern house. In 1486 Ansbach went to Frederick and Baireuth to Sigismund, the younger sons of Elector Albert Achilles. In 1495 Frederick inherited Ansbach and founded the elder Culmbach line, which died out in 1603. Elector John George then settled Baireuth on his son Christian, and Ansbach on his son Joachim Ernest, who became the founders of the younger Culmbach line. In 1769 the Margraves of Baireuth died out, and Baireuth was united with Ansbach. The Baireuth-Ansbach line died out in 1806. But by a previous arrangement in 1791 Frederick William III incorporated Ansbach and Baireuth with the kingdom of Prussia. Both were lost in 1806–7. They now form part of the modern kingdom of Bavaria.

CHAPTER III

BRANDENBURG-PRUSSIA FROM 1618 TO 1740

Prussia—the second phase.

THE second great chapter of Brandenburg-Prussian history commences with the Thirty Years' War in 1618, and ends with the accession of Frederick the Great in 1740. As a clearly defined stage in the evolution of the modern kingdom of Prussia, this epoch has a recognizable and well-marked character. For it is the period in which Brandenburg-Prussia became the most important principality in northern Germany, won its way into the European state-system, and defined and consolidated the features of her polity which by 1740 combined to make her a state *sui generis*. Five characteristics stand out in prominent relief against the crowded and complicated details of these 120 years: the establishment of the personal autocracy of the ruler; the extension (at the expense of German neighbours and rivals) of the territories possessed in 1618; the conversion of the electorate into a kingdom; the foundation of a standing army of remarkable strength in proportion to the area of the state and the size of its population; and the parallel foundation of a centralized and highly efficient civil administration, which like the army was under the supreme and irresponsible direction of the Prussian sovereign. In 1618 Brandenburg-Prussia was a loosely knit and imperfectly amalgamated principality, the authority of whose


BRANDENBURG
PRUSSIA
1618
BALTIC SEA
Heligoland
SCHLESWIG
HOLSTEIN
Kiel
Lubeck
Hamburg
Bremen
OLDENBURG
R. Weser
Hanover
Münster
R. Rhine
Aachen
Cologne
Coblenz
Treves
R. Meuse
Frankfurt
Mainz
Worms
Speier
Rastadt
Baden
Strasburg
BADEN
Ulm
R. Danube
Basel
Munich
Salzburg
BAVARIA
R. Main
Bamberg
Straisund
Colberg
EAST PUMMERANIA
MECKLENBURG
Stettin
ELECTORATE OF BRANDENBURG
Berlin
NEUMARK
MAGDEBURG
Halle
Leipzig
Erfurt
Weimar
Jena
Göttingen
SAXONY
Dresden
Prague
BOHEMIA
Königgratz
Austerlitz
Wagram
Vienna
DUCHY OF SILESIA
Breslau
R. Oder
Posen
Gnesen
KINGDOM OF POLAND
Warsaw
R. Vistula
Thorn
Culm
MASOVIA (POLISH)
Marienwerder
Marienburg
Elbing
Danzig
Oliva
Königsberg
Pillau
Braunsberg
DUCHY OF EAST PRUSSIA
PRUSSIA (THE TEUTONIC ORDER)
Electorate of Brandenburg
Duchy of East Prussia (1525 – 1618)
Prussia under the Teutonic Order
R. B. Parkinson
Oxford

ruler was disputed and shared by the nobles, the estates and the privileged corporations, honeycombed by religious dissidence and warring creeds, without an army or the requisite organs of a unified state life. In 1740 the kingdom of Prussia, though not yet geographically compact, was a unity, strong, well administered, and (as the sequel proved) surprisingly well equipped for a further advance. No other German principality in these critical hundred and twenty years made a progress comparable to that of Prussia. In 1618 Berlin could not compete with Dresden, Heidelberg, and Munich as centres of political activity and moral weight in German and European life, but in 1740 the new sovereign who inherited the fruits of his predecessors' labours dared to challenge the Habsburg power.

Elector George William (1618–40), the successor to John Sigismund, had no part in this remarkable progress. Frederick the Great, who searched the annals of his House for the lessons of statecraft, and was as severe on incompetence in a Hohenzollern as on a mediocre general or a dishonest Landrat, pronounced him 'utterly unfit to rule'. Elector George William was a pleasant, pious, well-intentioned young man, with a Teutonic appetite for meat and drink, a third-rate brain, and fourth-rate moral power. He would have made an average Junker in any part of his own dominions, or a harmless member of his great-grandson's 'Tobacco-Parliament'. Our Charles II might have said of him quite as truly as of George of Denmark, 'I have tried him drunk and I have tried him sober. Either way there is nothing in him.' His ruling passion, the chase, seems like that of Louis XVI to have been

Elector George William, 1618–40.

singularly whetted by revolution, and a cruel fate plunged him during the whole of his 'reign' in the most catastrophic upheaval that Germany had yet endured. During the whirlwinds of the Thirty Years' War—the epoch of Richelieu, Gustavus Adolphus, Maximilian of Bavaria, and Wallenstein—he endeavoured to evade decisions, himself a Calvinist ruling over Lutheran Brandenburg and East Prussia with a chief minister, Schwarzenberg, who was a Catholic and the champion of the House of Austria. His brother-in-law, Gustavus Adolphus, urged on him the necessity of 'masculine counsels' (*mascula concilia*), but George William's worst defect was not so much indecision of mind as his failure to see the necessity for decision and the absence of a mind to make up. Two such electors, and Prussia would have ceased to provide anything but parochial history.

The issues of the Thirty Years' War.

For Brandenburg the world struggle that broke out in 1618 involved two supreme issues. Was the House of Austria, directing the Counter-Reformation, to smash political Protestantism in Germany and establish a renovated and military empire from Stralsund to the passes of the Alps on the basis of a renovated Catholicism and a united Catholic league of German states? Was the dominion of the Baltic Sea (*dominium maris Baltici*) to pass into Catholic hands, and the Baltic, and with it northern Germany, to be controlled by the northern Catholic Powers with Poland at their head? Each spelled ruin for Brandenburg as a Protestant and political electorate of the Empire. An unscrupulous genius at Berlin, steering in the murky night by the clear and lonely star of Hohenzollern self-interest, might have sold

his alliance from phase to phase on the highest terms to the highest bidder—Catholic or Protestant, Habsburg, Wittelsbach, Bourbon, or Vasa—and emerged, bleeding but triumphant, with Pomerania, Mecklenburg, and West Prussia hammered by war into the electoral dominions. Frederick the Great would have achieved no less; and what the Great Elector accomplished with emaciated resources was not beyond the power of George William from 1618 to 1630. But had a Gustavus Adolphus or a Cromwell been ruling in Berlin, obedient to the inspiration that Brandenburg meant Protestantism and Protestantism Brandenburg, and the consciousness that the Divine Taskmaster in His inscrutable Providence had imposed this wonderful mission on His servant the elector to save the Truth by making a state, German Protestantism might have been welded together with a Protestant Baltic at its back, Lutheran and Calvinist crushed into unity, and the Protestant primacy wrested from the ineffective 'Winter-King' at Heidelberg and the beery and somnolent Saxon elector at Dresden. The Thirty Years' War and the Revolution of 1848 have this in common. In each case the old Germany had collapsed; in the mighty moral and intellectual revolution that had wrought the collapse the Time-Spirit offered a unique opportunity. In each case, from the lack of the higher spiritual and political vision, and from the moral cowardice that we call indecision, the Hohenzollern ruler failed. In each case the great refusal drove the next generation to make good the failure by building in alliance with a rancid reaction.

Neutrality, 1619–31.

From 1619 to 1631 Elector George William took refuge in a policy of neutrality that meant nullity. He saw the

Elector Palatine crushed in Bohemia, driven from the Palatinate, his electoral dignity taken away and given to Bavaria, himself obliged to acquiesce in a Dutch occupation of Cleves (1624). He negotiated with Denmark and with Sweden, and with Vienna, only to witness the King of Denmark struck down at Lutter, and Mansfeld crushed at Dessau (1626), while the Swedes seized Pillau and Memel, 'the eyes of the Baltic,' and Danes, Westphalians, and Imperialists marched across the Altmark ravaging and burning. Wallenstein pushed north to secure Mecklenburg for himself, and compelled the elector to 'ransom' his neutrality at a heavy cost—Mecklenburg, on the reversion of which the Hohenzollerns had the strongest of legal claims.

The Edict of Restitution (1629) threatened to extirpate the Calvinists and to undo the result of the Reformation in Brandenburg. Between alliance with the victorious Imperialists and alliance with his brother-in-law the King of Sweden, freed from the Polish War, and now ready to strike hard for Protestantism in Germany, there was no middle course; but George William dallied and haggled, and it was not until Magdeburg had fallen to Tilly and the Swedish guns were trained on Berlin that Brandenburg-Prussia entered the Swedish alliance (June 21, 1631).

The Swedish alliance, 1631–5; alliance with 'Austria', 1635–40.

Schwarzenberg temporarily retired, and for four uneasy years the elector was a Swedish ally, more anxious apparently to save Pomerania from Sweden than Brandenburg from the Imperialists. The death of Gustavus Adolphus at Lützen (1632), and Swedish reverses in the south, enabled him to escape from his fetters and accept

the Peace of Prague (August 8, 1635), which led to a rupture with Sweden. From 1636 to his death the elector, under the influence of Schwarzenberg, restored to power, was the ally of the House of Austria. In 1637 the ducal line in Pomerania died out, and George William claimed the inheritance, in virtue of the Heritage-Fraternity of 1529. Sweden refused to recognize the claim. Authorized by the Emperor to recover it by force, the elector, with such imperial help as he could buy or conjure, made three efforts which ended in dismal failure. For three years Brandenburg was the cockpit of the northern combatants, invaded and plundered by friend and foe, by Saxon, Swede, and Imperialist from the south. Cleves was threatened with military execution by the Dutch for the non-payment of their occupation and services. The estates of East Prussia were on the verge of revolt. To the elector, driven to take refuge in Königsberg, death brought release on December 1, 1640.

The Great Elector, 1640–88.

His successor, Elector Frederick William, known, both in his own day and since, as the Great Elector, was a lad of twenty, whose mother was Elizabeth Charlotte of the Palatinate, a granddaughter of William of Orange, 'The Silent'. The forty-eight years of his rule are decisive in the history of Brandenburg-Prussia, which Frederick the Great summed up with truthful brevity, 'Celui-ci a fait de grandes choses.' His training, as M. Waddington aptly remarks, had given him no experience of affairs, but much experience of men and of life. Till fourteen he was educated in the electorate, and then spent four years with his relatives in Holland—a true centre of European diplomacy and school of statecraft—

and under such leaders as Frederick Henry and John Maurice of Orange fitted to form his mind and brace his character. Refused in 1638 the administration of Cleves, he spent the next two years at Königsberg, an impotent witness of failure and humiliation. Nature had endowed him with a robust physique, an immense industry, a strong brain, iron will, and violent temper, which he did little to control. He stands in his portraits a princely figure, with something of intellectual distinction but much more of force in the deep blue eyes, firm mouth, and powerful jaw. It is the face of a man who has wrestled with life and wrenched its lessons to serve a masterful purpose. He brought to his task an adequate technique, for he knew French, Latin, and Polish. He was a learner in 1640, and he remained a learner to the end.

The ten years that preceded 1640 and the forty which followed were stern teachers. Frederick William was a pious Calvinist, but facts, as he interpreted them, enforced the conclusion that in a world demoralized by a devastating war success would come to the man who took that world as he found it, met force with force, guile with guile. Brandenburg had been ruined because its rulers had forgotten that foes were pitiless and friends selfish. The sum of statecraft lay in doing to others what they would do to you, in attaining the means to do it and to prevent them from doing it. The interest of the state and of the ruler were one—to achieve power, for power meant independence, security, and peace. Diplomacy, treaties, wars were the statecraftsman's weapons behind which lay the force of the state; and the ruler, to do his

duty, must be an uncontrolled director of that force. The obstacles to strength within must be broken as effectually as the foes and rivals without. In practical terms that meant that Brandenburg-Prussia must have a single will and a single master, an army, a revenue, and an obedient executive.

Foreign policy, 1640–88.

Foreign affairs were a continuous problem for forty-eight strenuous years. Frederick William had grown to manhood with strong principles—he hated and feared and desired to punish all who had wronged, as he read it, Brandenburg-Prussia—the House of Austria and the Catholics, the Spaniard, the Swede, the Pole, and the German rival. But he was always ready to mask his feelings, to accept an ally for what he was worth, and to bow, unconvinced, to the inevitable. The diplomatist who cannot make facts and a situation must adapt himself to them, and in a supple, resourceful, and unflinching foreign policy, his judgement told him, lay the fortunes of his House and state. For the unmapped labyrinth of policy he had, and never lost, an infallible compass and an unquenchable lamp—the interest of Prussia. Sacrifice to the interest of Prussia would serve most truly religion, honour, and material prosperity.

The first phase—1640–8.

The first task was to extricate a perishing principality and achieve peace. Schwarzenberg was probably saved from dismissal and disgrace by an opportune death (1641), and the young elector kneeled to the King of Poland and received investiture of East Prussia—perhaps with a silent vow that with God's grace the duchy should some day be his and not a gift from the alien Slav at Warsaw. Meanwhile he recruited a military force, and

by adroit manipulation shook himself free of the imperial alliance and concluded an armistice with Sweden (1643–4). The choice of a wife was a part of foreign policy. 'La Grande Mademoiselle', Anne Marie of Orléans, was French and a Catholic; Queen Christina of Sweden, no less gifted and masterful than himself, would have subjugated Berlin and Königsberg to Stockholm. The young elector found his electress in Louisa Henrietta, eldest daughter of Frederick Henry of Orange, and thereby cemented his connexion with a brilliant House and a powerful Protestant state (1646). Her memory survives to-day in Oranienburg, her favourite château, near Berlin, as does that of her successor, the elector's second wife, Dorothea of Holstein-Glücksburg, in the Dorotheen-Stadt and the famous Unter den Linden which she planted.

The war had worn itself out. In the negotiations that led up to the memorable Treaties of Westphalia (October 24, 1648) Frederick William battled with all the weapons at his disposal to secure first the whole of Pomerania, secondly for the Calvinists the political and religious privileges granted in 1555 by the Peace of Augsburg to (Lutheran) Protestants. In this latter he succeeded, and the Elector of Brandenburg by his championship placed himself at the head of the Corpus Evangelicorum and won the leadership of Protestantism in Germany. But of Pomerania he secured only the eastern and poorer half with the bishopric of Cammin, the western part with Stettin being assigned to the Swedes. In compensation, he wrested from a reluctant Empire the secularized bishoprics of Halberstadt and

Minden, with the reversion of the rich archbishopric of Magdeburg (which was finally taken over in 1681). Considering the elector's position and resources in 1640 these were brilliant gains; they consolidated and strengthened the central nucleus of his dominions, and are the most convincing proofs of a remarkable recovery and an unexpected skill. In eight years the shattered and despised Brandenburg had emerged the strongest Protestant principality of the Empire. Is it surprising that the treaties were regarded as a complete justification of the elector's creed and diplomatic methods?

The second phase—1648–60.

The next seven years were occupied in clearing the Swedes out of eastern Pomerania (1651), in taking over the new territories east and west of the Elbe, in the commencement of a drastic administrative and financial reorganization, in the steady increase and reform of his military forces, in freeing Cleves from Dutch occupation, and in an attempted *coup de main* on Jülich and Berg, lost in 1614, which broke down (1651). Frederick William recognized that he had failed because he was not strong enough, and protracted negotiations finally ended in the settlement of 1666, which practically confirmed the Treaty of Xanten (1614). Cleves, Mark, and Ravensberg remained to the Hohenzollerns, with a right of succession to Jülich, Berg, and Ravenstein if the Neuburg line died out. The framework of the Brandenburg state once more spread from Königsberg to the Rhine. Its grip on northern Germany was definitely made good. But the Northern War, which broke out in 1655, and the elector's cynical and tortuous policy proved that the heart of the elector and of his dominions lay between the

Pregel and the Elbe. Sweden, under Charles X, had challenged again the Polish monarchy. Neutrality was impossible for Brandenburg-Prussia. But the elector was determined to wring from friend and foe, at all costs, a solid advantage for himself. Both sides should pay, for he had an army, and he had learned what a cool and unscrupulous diplomacy could achieve. In 1656 the Treaty of Königsberg, by which East Prussia was to be held as a Swedish fief and Ermeland secularized and annexed to it, made him the ally of Sweden. The Brandenburg troops did fine service at the great battle of Warsaw, and the elector raised his terms. By the Treaty of Labiau, in the same year, East Prussia and Ermeland were to be sovereign possessions of the Hohenzollern duke. Sweden's military difficulties increased, and the elector flung his ally over and joined the Polish side. The Treaty of Bromberg promised him East Prussia, but without Ermeland, free of Polish suzerainty. The final Peace of Oliva (1660), negotiated under the direction of Sweden's ally, France, put an end to a war which had become European. The elector retained East Prussia as an independent duchy, but Elbing that he had hoped to annex with it was not included. In 1663 he made his solemn entry into Königsberg to take over the sovereign power. East Prussia was not within the limits or the jurisdiction of the empire. At Königsberg the Elector of Brandenburg and Duke of Cleves henceforward ruled as a sovereign with a European position. The ducal crown gave him among the German princes a peculiar distinction.

The lesson of 1660.

These three years of war and treaty-making completed Frederick William's political and military education.

The lessons they taught are clearly traceable in the rest of his career. The value of an army, indeed the imperative necessity of a strong military force, had been proved up to the hilt. The elector had utilized the vacancy in the imperial throne (1657) to wring from the House of Austria every possible concession. He had extorted from the necessities both of Sweden and of Poland the maximum of advantage for himself, and he had shown himself as dangerous in friendship as in enmity. Between Sweden on the one side and the House of Austria on the other he occupied and must continue to occupy a middle position, the perils of which could only be averted by increased strength, the utmost vigilance, and a continued determination to play off the one against the other and to exploit the rivalries of both to the profit of the elector. The future, still more than the past, forbade generosity or Quixotism. In a lynx-eyed egoism lay the destinies of Prussia. But the Peace of Oliva had also taught the bitter truth that northern Germany was part of a great European problem. Mazarin and the superb soldiership of Charles X had saved Sweden. The German princes had to reckon with the designs of France, the sleepless rival of the House of Austria. Diplomacy was a complicated and bewildering maze in which ambitions of territorial expansion, commerce, and religion were in conflict, and only to be unravelled by a cool hand and a remorseless purpose. And in 1660 the France of Richelieu and Mazarin—which had made Reason of State its ideal—was about to become the France of Louis XIV.

For eleven years Brandenburg-Prussia was in compara- 1660–79.

tive isolation, and its ruler occupied with strenuous internal reforms, years by no means wasted. The elector's sympathies, as French intervention in Germany increased, were with the growing anti-French coalition. The danger to Holland in 1672 brought him into the League of Brunswick, and the invasion of Cleves in the great French turning movement against the Dutch brought home the vulnerability of his scattered dominions, and is an apt illustration of how his position compelled him to play a European rôle. The Treaty of Vossem (1673) enabled him to withdraw from the struggle, but in 1674 he was back on the side of his former allies, and as an elector took part in the imperialist campaign on the upper Rhine. Thence he was peremptorily summoned to the north. Sweden, France's ally, at France's direction had flung aside her neutrality and invaded Brandenburg. The elector's time had come—he was determined to finish with the Swede. The victory at Fehrbellin (1675), which shattered the Swedish reputation for invincibility, was followed by a series of brilliant campaigns in which the Swedes were driven out of Pomerania and East Prussia, Stettin, Stralsund, and the island of Rügen captured, and only the lack of a fleet prevented these telling blows from being repeated across the waters of the Baltic (1675–8). The elector's military fame had reached its zenith.

The Peace of St. Germain (1679).

The Peace of St. Germain (June 29, 1679) was a bitter blow. The imperial coalition had been beaten in the west. If Frederick William stood victorious on the shores of the Baltic and had a right to expect that at last he could retain what the sword had given, he was confronted

with a triumphant France, and Louis XIV, with his troops on the Weser, was inexorable. To her ally Sweden must be restored all that she had lost in fighting France's battles. Nor were the Empire and the House of Austria ready to reopen a hopeless struggle merely to aggrandize a Hohenzollern elector. Frederick William bowed to the inevitable, and Sweden recovered West Pomerania, Stralsund, and Stettin. The right bank of the Oder, the tolls and customs duties on the river, and an indemnity of 300,000 thalers were the sole fruits of four years of victorious war. Once again Western Pomerania, coveted for a century, had been struck from Hohenzollern hands.

The last phase—1679–88.

Tradition credits the disillusioned and enraged elector with the prophecy that a Hohenzollern of the future would one day avenge the insulting humiliation. But his practical interpretation of the situation was shown in the secret treaty with France (October 25, 1679), in which he became the paid ally of Louis XIV, and subordinated his policy to French direction. This treaty, together with the confirmatory document of January 11, 1681, and subsequent conventions, was concluded without his ministers' knowledge and was so skilfully concealed that its publication in 1867 in the heyday of German nationalism was a grievous blow to the legend of that historic mission of Prussia, of which the Great Elector was represented as the first evangelist. Erudite Prussian savants wrote with solemn pain of the treachery to Germany and the indelible blot on the Great Elector's record. And if we are prepared to believe that at Berlin in 1679 Frederick William viewed the German world

with the eyes of those who witnessed Königgrätz and Sedan, he must stand in the pillory, but not for the sin of the French alliance alone and not without the company of some of his illustrious successors. But in 1679 Frederick William—it is the marrow of his policy and criticism of life—was concerned with a very real present. The future would take care of itself if the ruler dealt faithfully with the facts of the day. His allies had deserted him. They should learn he was in earnest and an ally who would pay them in their own coin. Louis XIV was terribly strong. So long as France would do his business, she should pay for doing it. He pocketed without a scruple the good French gold, used it to make his army and his state stronger, and was ready, as events showed, to change his 'system' when the interests of Prussia demanded it. In brief, the Great Elector was no prophetic architect of Prussia's mission to work for Germany. 'Germany' did not exist. If Prussia had a mission it lay in securing Prussia's direct and immediate interest. Instead of a mission, he left to his heirs, who would interpret his career aright, the fruits and the maxims of a *Real-politik*. Public affairs and the government of a state were superior to the private morality of the ruler. What would be wrong in the individual might be right in the prince. Success was the criterion. In 1672 the elector had made the profound mistake of relying on the Dutch, the House of Austria and the German Princes, and of opposing France. His aid had been to their interest and not his, and they had very naturally left him in the lurch. His disappointment had been embittered by personal wrath at a grievous error of judgement and

a miscalculation of 'real' facts. In his eyes the unpardonable crime was not the entering on 'the dance of the louis d'or', but in the homely language of a great master of foreign affairs, 'the putting his money on the wrong horse'.

The new system—1684–88

The French alliance lasted until 1684. It was abandoned because the elector became convinced that, apart from solid gold, France would not do his business. Sweden had broken with France, which could now enable the French ally at Berlin to 'recover' western Pomerania. But France evaded every suggestion, while the réunions in Alsace, the seizure of Strasburg, the aggressions on the Empire were profoundly disquieting and threatened another great European war. Peace was saved by the Truce of Regensburg (1684), in which the elector acquiesced, though Louis XIV retained the fruits of his imperious violation of neutrality. An abler and a colder head than the Great Elector's, his nephew William of Orange, was now directing with pitiless patience the formation of a great European coalition against France. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) was a direct blow at the interests of Protestant and tolerant Prussia; it cut into the quick of the Calvinist elector. He replied with an offer of Prussia as an asylum to the oppressed Huguenots, and without a formal rupture with France concluded the Treaty of the Hague (1685), reviving the alliance of 1678. The House of Austria also was willing to conciliate Hohenzollern claims on Brieg, Liegnitz and Wohlau in Silesia by the cession of Schwiebus, while it secretly cajoled the elector's heir into a promise to restore it, unknown to his father—a characteristic stroke of

Habsburg *Realpolitik* against a Hohenzollern master. But before the decisive breach with France had been made the elector died (May 9, 1688). The crisis in England absorbed him in his last year, and he was ready to support William's expedition to secure the island sea-power for Protestantism and the Grand Alliance against France. The last passwords that he chose for the guard at Berlin were 'London' and 'Amsterdam'.

The reorganization of the Constitution.

Foreign policy was only one-half of Frederick William's work. The drastic reorganization, amounting to an internal revolution, of the constitutional and administrative machinery occupied him from the first weeks after his accession to his death, and it is hall-marked with the imprint of a masterful personality, a tenacious grip on clearly conceived ends, a cynical indifference to the means employed provided they were efficient, and a deep-rooted conviction that it was the duty of the ruler to rule, to seek power and ensue it. The governor was charged with the interpretation of the interests of the state, which were the interests of the community; against this interest neither privileges nor charters, neither constitutional tradition nor existing institutions could be permitted to argue or prevail. Facts and a bitter experience supported this implicit political creed. In 1640 the elector was confronted with an empty treasury, a disorganized rabble of a militia, Diets that could neither make, nor execute, nor obey law, and with subjects who could not defend themselves and refused to pay others to defend them. When Protestantism was at stake in a perishing world the Lutheran majority could rejoice at

the downfall of the Calvinist Elector Palatine and were more ready to crush the Calvinist heretic than to save themselves from the mercies of Wallenstein or Tilly. Brandenburg and Prussia needed a well-filled treasury, an army that had learned the elementary lessons of discipline and obedience, a government with knowledge of the secret of the chanceries, and strong enough to give every subject of the state peace and the rights of his class. The interests of true religion no less imperatively required that those who were dutiful subjects and served their rulers faithfully, should be allowed liberty of worship and of conscience. If the Great Elector learned much from the diplomacy of Richelieu, Mazarin and Oxenstjerna, he had also been a disciple in the school of Frederick Henry of Orange, of Wallenstein, and, above all, of Gustavus Adolphus. Sweden had made itself a great power. The man who personified its greatness was the incomparable soldier, the creator of its army and the master of its foreign policy, to whom the interest of Sweden was the higher law.

Frederick William's age.

Frederick William was a son of defeat, and he passed his working life in a Germany condemned to remake its civilization from the wreckage, devastation and horrors of thirty years of war, which had unchained and brutalized the worst human passions—a Germany dazzled by the brilliance of the wonderful France of the seventeenth century. If the best minds of that France in the spheres of spirit, imagination, and the artistry of life made for progress, the sunshine and shadow of the Roi Soleil cast a stronger spell. The greatest of French ministers and the greatest of French kings were apostles of reaction, and

their work and their example—the glorification of the state, the fetish of a unity constructed from the ruin of religious liberty, and of local and economic self-government, the identification of the interest of the community with the ambition and splendour of the sovereign,—made the reaction in Germany, born of disillusionment and disaster, irresistible. Unlike his weaker and more sensual contemporaries, lay and ecclesiastical, Frederick William did not mistake the trappings for the reality, did not believe that red shoes and flunkeys in gold lace, mistresses, an orangery, or a palace built by grinding the faces of the poor, made in themselves a ruler and a state. His own domestic life was pure. He was a loyal husband to two loyal and devoted wives. His court was simple, and comparatively free from the grossness and vulgarity so noticeable elsewhere. He found time for a genuine interest in mathematics, physics, and chemistry, as well as in pictures, coins and antiques, and the electoral library in the castle at Berlin laid a noble foundation for the royal library of to-day. The city of Berlin may be said to be his special creation. In 1640 it had sunk to a battered township of 6,000 inhabitants. In 1688, rebuilt, extended and adorned, it contained perhaps 30,000 citizens, and already figured in the descriptive notebooks of the cultivated traveller, surprised to find so agreeable and fine a city in the sour solitudes of the Brandenburg March. But in the higher planes of political thought and administrative action the elector's personality chimed with the gospel from Paris: unity through the ruler, the crushing of every institution that hampered an absolute control of all the resources, human or material,

in the state, the interpretation of law as the will of the ruler, and of civic duty as obedience to a self-determining authority. Frederick William was the founder of Prussian absolutism, the originator of the machinery that it required, and the obstinate champion of the social structure that the system demanded.

East Prussia.

The centre of the opposition was in East Prussia, particularly after the Polish suzerainty had been extinguished. The elector's object was a quadruple one: to secure the recognition of his supreme power, to override the right of the estates alone to grant taxation; to break the power of the executive and the control of the executive vested in the four superior councillors (Oberräte) and the Diet (Landtag); and to obtain recognition for the elector's directly appointed officials in taxation and administration. It was only by military force, by arresting and executing the leaders, Roth and the two von Kalcksteins; by a prolonged contest with Landtag after Landtag; and by continuous administrative action that the privileges and strength of the estates were gradually whittled away. Similarly, in Cleves and in the annexations gained in 1648 sharp war was made on the Diets and estates, and the electoral right to appoint a governor (Statthalter) to act as the head of the executive was won. The discontinuance of united Diets; the reference to local assemblies which could be managed or overawed; the continuous intervention both in local taxation and administration by the electoral officials; the practice of obtaining grants for periods of years, which made the summoning of the local bodies unnecessary, and the forces of a unified control and of the army combined to

destroy or render nugatory the mediaeval 'liberties' and privileges. In their place came the governor, the college of government (Regierung), the circles (Kreise), administered by the sheriff (Landrat), and the commissioner of taxes, appointed by and responsible to the supreme head of the state. The widespread electoral domains, directly administered by the elector as lord of the land, provided a model for the civil administration to imitate and surpass. And in both spheres the paid and disciplined officials of the elector increased in numbers and importance.

The army. From the very commencement the creation of a standing military force was perhaps the chief object of the elector, and the 4,000 to 5,000 men he enlisted in 1641 had grown by 1688 to a permanent army of 25,000 to 30,000 soldiers, obtained by enlistment, well equipped, subjected to severe discipline under a special military law, and commanded by a trained corps of officers. Such an army implied special administrative organs for its finance, maintenance and efficiency. The war chancery, the war commissioners, the war chest or treasury, with their subsidiary local machinery and officials, were created and put to work side by side with the civil administration. The army was a potent instrument of unification, for if it was locally enlisted, its supreme direction was centralized. The soldiers of Cleves might be required to serve in East Prussia, and they knew no authority but the elector's. It became a state institution, and its officers, chosen from the nobility, acquired a privileged position. It had no mediaeval history; it made its own reputation; it was sharply distinguished from local and civil life; its sword

was the ruler's, and it was encouraged to regard itself as the salt of citizenship and the bulwark of Prussia's strength. It could claim to have made Prussia—to be Prussia. The militarization of the state meant that the ruler as well as his dominion were militarized, began to interpret life in military categories and to regard their military authority as the first of all duties. To maintain in poor and scantily populated lands so large a force involved special taxation, the sacrifice of civil to military expenditure, the development of powerful administrative organs whose claims were supreme; it meant also ideals of duty, obedience, system, control, management and law from above which infiltrated into and reacted on all social, civil and political thought. The first soldier was the Hohenzollern ruler; the army was a creation of the dynasty, the symbol of its strength, the field and arm of its statesmanship. To be the commander-in-chief in the civil state as he was in the army was the inevitable ideal of government for Frederick William and his successors. And the alliance between 'throne' and the officers' corps added a military bond to the common social and economic interests of ruler and the Junker aristocracy. The *esprit de corps* of the regiment blossomed into a political and social ideal.

The privy council.

The reorganized privy council (Geheimer Staatsrat) was becoming the brain of the civil as distinct from the military administration, through which and with the advice of which the elector governed and made policy. Its functions were deliberative, executive, legislative and judicial, in that it exercised a general supervision over the administration of justice. Its members, honoured

with the title of excellency, were either important executive officers or advisers selected for their weight and experience in political affairs, and the privy council became the effective and continuous substitute for the dislocated and intermittent local Diets and estates; like the Tudor privy council it co-ordinated and systematized the ruler's supervision of the whole administration.

Commerce and colonization.

Frederick William's activities made themselves felt in every sphere of action. His attention to taxation and to economy was unremitting; the promotion of trade and industry, by speeding up and encouraging local effort, by the regulation of corporations and guilds, by the introduction of new trades and manufactures, by a scientific interest in agriculture, by draining marshes, cutting down forests, constructing canals and bringing waste or unoccupied land into cultivation, fills a large chapter in his internal policy. Commerce and navigation, he pronounced, are the two chief columns of a state—a saying in which we can trace the authorship of Colbert, and the fruitful lessons that he had begun in Holland and continued to his death. His dominions, even without the devastation of the Great War, needed men and women, and the colonization of Brandenburg and Prussia was continuous from 1648 onwards. A Dutch settlement was made in the New March; Swiss, French and Germans from all parts of the Empire were encouraged to settle, cultivate and multiply. The persecuted Calvinist from Saxony or Lutheran from the Palatinate, even the persecuted Catholic, could find a home in tolerant Prussia. The French Huguenot Church at Berlin, founded as early as 1672, recalls the steady immigration

of French colonists, which culminated after 1685 in the numerous groups, flying from the dragonnades of Louis XIV, who founded the Moabit quarter to the north-west of Berlin, and brought, as they did to England, new trades to the desert wastes of the March, a new thrift and solid qualities of character. Frederick William could plead, indeed, that toleration was a policy that paid. In one respect—the commencement of a colonial policy—the elector began what was not resumed for two centuries. In 1680 he started a small navy, and in 1681 made a double settlement on the Guinea coast. Both are characteristic of his appreciation of the principles of policy in the great western states, and the foundation of an African company with a base at Emden was modelled on English, Dutch and French examples. But the enterprise languished. Prussia had no harbour on the ocean; rivals were numerous and powerful. King Frederick William I abandoned the attempt in 1720, and sold the settlement to the Dutch. In 1884, when the German flag reappeared in West Africa, the Emperor William declared that at last he could look the Great Elector in the face.

The man and his work.

Frederick the Great summed up his ancestor with the criticism that if he was not always master of the first move he was always master of the second. His most solid achievements were the result of an indomitable pertinacity and a combination of intellectual qualities. In no department of his work does he exhibit the originality of genius or a brain of the first order. Neither as a soldier, an administrator, nor as a political thinker is he in the first class of his age. But he could understand and adapt to very practical ends some of the most telling ideas

that more powerful minds were impressing on their generation. Of many of the most potent elements in the strength of states he was ignorant, to others deliberately blind. For if he was a disciple of the new enlightened absolutism and worshipped at the altar of Reason of State, he interpreted his creed in the categories of a cramping and caste-ridden society. Nothing in Brandenburg-Prussia needed more drastic reform than the social and economic framework which imprisoned the serf, the burgher and the noble. But the destroyer of mediaeval liberties was the champion of the feudal economy. The worst of all reactions is the exploitation of the worn-out machinery of one age by the new political philosophy of another. Frederick William shares, too, with his greater successor, Frederick II, the defect of relying too implicitly on material results.

The significance of his 'reign' is more truly found, not in the acres that he added, nor the increase in population, nor in statistics which emphasize the difference in prosperity and power between 1640 and 1688, memorable as all these are; but in the character and interpretation of Prussia's future that he indelibly stamped on the constitution, administration, and policy of his tripartite principality. Until the age of revolution, of Stein and his colleagues, the task of his successors was to make explicit what he left implicit, and to carry to a logical conclusion both the merits and the defects of his Idea of a State. In the combination of his intellectual qualities Frederick William surpasses all the rulers of his house save one, Frederick II, and the difference between these two is the difference between great talents and indisputable genius.

His immediate successor is chiefly remembered as the winner of a crown, and the founder of the Prussian monarchy. The negotiations and the diplomacy which led to this triumphant assertion of dynastic ambition were moulded by the three great European struggles which convulsed Europe from the English Revolution to the Treaties of Utrecht and Rastatt (1713)—the War of the Grand Alliance (1689–97), the War of the Spanish Succession (1702–13), and the Great Northern War (1698–1721), which ended in the downfall of the Swedish Empire and a revolution in the political conditions of the Baltic. In the first phase, guided by his minister Danckelmann, Frederick adhered to the system of the House of Austria, and was an active member of the League of Augsburg—the coalition of England, the Netherlands and 'Austria'—the Prussian troops taking part in the campaigns on the Rhine and in the operations that led to the fall of Namur (1695). But the Peace of Ryswick (1697) did not bring to the elector what he so ardently desired—the principality of Orange and the guarantee of a royal crown from his allies. Danckelmann was sacrificed to the Hanoverian sympathies of the Electress, the witty, cultivated and pious Sophia Charlotte, daughter of Elector Ernst Augustus and the Electress Sophia, mother of the English King George I. But by 1701, unremitting negotiation, and the certainty of a renewed struggle with France over the Spanish Succession, which made the Prussian army essential to the House of Austria, prevailed. On January 18, 1701, Elector Frederick crowned himself King in Prussia at Königsberg, which enshrines the memory of Ottocar, King of Bohemia (1255),

Elector and King Frederick, 1688–1713.

with every circumstance of pomp and splendour. And the creation of the Order of the Black Eagle—that imperial eagle which Hermann von Salza had first stamped on the black cross of the Teutonic Order—fitly completed a memorable day. It is not surprising that those who see in Prussian history the realization through Hohenzollern hands of the cosmic process of a preordained idea should credit the new king as he stood at the altar of the Schlosskirche in Königsberg with the vision of a greater January 18—when his descendant, crowned also in the same castle chapel, should be acclaimed German Emperor in the Galerie des Glaces of Louis XIV at Versailles.

The Prussian monarchy.

The Prussian crown was more than a circlet of gold and precious stones. The elector placed it on his own head, though the royal unction was bestowed by a Calvinist and a Lutheran minister. It was a gift neither from pope nor emperor, and it symbolized the political irresponsibility of its wearer. East Prussia was not within the jurisdiction of the territorial limits of the Empire. The elector became a sovereign European prince, and if as yet he claimed to be only king *in* not *of* Prussia—for West Prussia was still Polish—he marked out for his successors the task of completing their sovereignty. Frederick had seen his relative William of Orange become King of England, his rival the Albertine Elector of Saxony of the Wettin House become King of Poland, and the crown of England, Scotland, and Ireland guaranteed to his mother-in-law and her descendants, the Electress Sophia at Herrenhausen. As king, he could now stand on terms of equality with other kings. More significant

still, the electorate of Brandenburg was swallowed up in the monarchy, and the crown imposed a stronger bond of unity, under the sovereignty of the monarch, and a new prestige on the divided territories of his House. Privy councillors, soldiers, nobles, burghers, serfs alike in Cleves, the historic March, or the former Duchy of East Prussia, swore allegiance to the Prussian king, served in the royal Prussian army and administration, or toiled on the demesnes of the Prussian lord of the land and lord of war (Landesherr, Kriegsherr). The creation of the Prussian kingdom is more than a fact. It is an event of European import.

The War of the Spanish Succession (1702–13).

For the next eleven years Prussia fought with the Grand Alliance against Louis XIV, and Prussian troops took part in the historic battles of Blenheim, Turin, Cassano, Ramillies, of Oudenarde and Malplaquet, at which the Crown Prince, the future Frederick William I, was present. But the Treaties of Utrecht and Rastatt, which Frederick I did not live to see completed, did not bring a compensation equal to the sacrifices endured. Upper Guelderland and the recognition of the new monarchy were the sole gains, which with Quedlinburg (1697), Mörs and Lingen (1702), Neufchâtel (1707), Tecklenburg (1707), and Tauroggen (1691), are the sum of the territorial acquisition of his reign.

The Northern War.

Absorption in the great western struggle had prevented Prussia from striking for her own hand in the coalition formed by Russia, Poland, Hanover and Denmark to dismember the Swedish empire, and Frederick has been blamed for failing to see that the interests of Prussia lay on the Baltic, and for not using his fine army of 40,000

tried troops to secure the greatest share of the spoil. But Frederick I had neither the cynical courage, nor the unscrupulous political egoism, nor the diplomatic versatility of his father's *Realpolitik*. He might have deserted the Grand Alliance, imposed peace in the north, sold his aid successively to Stockholm, Warsaw, or Petrograd, tricked, deceived and shifted from side to side, bent only on acquiring Western Pomerania and Western Prussia by arms or by any means. But he did none of these things, perhaps because he had a conscience, more probably because he feared, as well he might, the soldiership of Charles XII, and had a thorough distrust of his own incapacity to match the unfathomable guile of Peter the Great and Augustus 'the Physically Strong', and the surly intrigues of his relatives at Herrenhausen. He could not, in short, make up his mind, and he fell under the spell of the greatest soldier and diplomatist of the day, Marlborough, who on two critical occasions kept him true to the Grand Alliance of the West. He could free his dominions by extending (1701) the *privilegium de non appellando*—by which no appeals went outside the electoral courts—and by setting up a supreme court of appeal at Berlin, one more organ of unification and royal authority, but a foreign policy of efficient selfishness on the scale of the Great Elector or Frederick the Great was quite beyond his powers.

Frederick I. The pomp and apparatus of royalty were wholly to his taste. Ceremony was the breath of his life. But he also loved arts and letters, and the foundation of the Royal Academy of Arts (1696), and the Royal Academy of Sciences (1700), and of the University at Halle (1694),

which became the centre of Protestant Theology, stands out in a reign of almost uninterrupted war. His queen, whose intellectual gifts made her the friend and patron of Leibniz, the most powerful brain, if we except Newton, in the Europe of his day, on her death-bed (1705), summed up one side of her husband's character. 'Do not grieve for me. I shall soon satisfy my curiosity about the causes of things, and give the king an opportunity for a wonderful funeral pageant.' But for all his vacillations, frivolous extravagance, and personal vanity Frederick remained true to the tolerant Protestantism of his father. If the language of his court was French, he continued and extended the liberty of conscience and worship which Prussian subjects enjoyed, and Prussia could claim to be the foremost German Protestant principality within and without the Empire.

Frederick William I, 1713–40.

War, plague, and royal extravagance had brought Prussia to the verge of bankruptcy. If her position was to be maintained a new regimen was imperatively required, and Frederick William I imposed it in startling measure. It is almost as difficult to believe that Frederick I and Sophia Charlotte could have such a son as that the son could be father of Frederick the Great. The twenty-seven years of his reign completed at a terrible price the work of the Great Elector; and in the evolution of Prussia they have their indisputable place as the period in which all the most unlovely and forbidding qualities of Prussianism were scourged into the kingdom. It may readily be conceded that Frederick William was amazingly industrious, pious, an observer of his marriage vows, a lover of peace, proud of being a German and a

Hohenzollern, not without a sense of the community of German interests, a loyal supporter of the House of Austria, a hater of idleness and all the shams and snobberies of second-rate courts and of the apparatus of lies and treachery which made the diplomacy of his day, combined with a passionate detestation of everything French, indeed of everything that did not fit in with his peculiar code of German or royal virtues. But the man and the ruler were and remain repellent, and his interpretation of life and duty was intolerable, reactionary, vulgar, and illiterate. His court was a barrack, his kingdom a combination of the farm-yard and the parade-ground, and he viewed both with the eye of the non-commissioned officer and the stud-groom. The immortal memoirs of his daughter Wilhelmina, inaccurate as they are in detail, constitute an indictment, confirmed by all the evidence available, which cannot be shaken by rows of statistics, the archives of research, and the erudite *ignoratio elenchi* of a corrupted militarism.

The bully of the royal hearth was the bully of the kingdom, whose conception of his prerogative and position was as domineering, raw and graceless as was his exercise of power. We might, perhaps, forgive the manners of a sweaty boor, the love of beer, tobacco and sauerkraut, of tall and kidnapped grenadiers, and of flogging his children and his subjects. Nature in conspiracy with his own self-sufficiency had denied him the brain to understand or the taste to enjoy poetry, letters, philosophy, or the arts. God and humanity shrivelled in his coarse and tyrannical fingers into the mould of his own starved and ignorant self. But we cannot forgive Frederick William

his conception of manhood and womanhood, his contempt for and war upon everything in the realms of spirit, intellect, and conscience that he could not understand, his determination to drill and thrash the men and women under his irresponsible autocracy into smaller copies of their master, and the delusion, as stupid as it was demoralizing, that a kingdom bred and saturated in the atmosphere of the 'Tobacco-Parliament' could be a state worth belonging to or ruling. Above all, we cannot forgive him for warping and brutalizing the genius of his extraordinary son. Two such kings as Frederick William I, and Prussia would have ceased to contribute to the world anything but the ethics of Bridewell and the lessons of the guard-room.

Foreign policy.

In 1713, Sweden, ruined by its astonishing sovereign, Charles XII, stood at bay in a bankrupt kingdom against Dane, Pole, Hanoverian, and Muscovite. Prussia had three reasons for joining the coalition—her claims on Pomerania, the perpetual danger, that Fehrbellin had typified, of being attacked in the rear by a sea-power, and the certainty that if she stood aside Sweden would be beaten, her German and Slavonic principalities divided up, and Prussia left without a share. Negotiations proved futile, and in 1713 the Prussian sword was thrown into the coalition. The exhausted Swedes fought heroically, but the Prussian troops swept them out of Pomerania, and in the final partition (1719–21) Frederick William obtained Wollin, Usedom and western Pomerania with Stettin as far as the river Peene. A new era had begun in the Baltic. Sweden sank to the position of a second-rate state, Denmark remained as she was, Poland was

decadent, but in the east Russia had commenced an imperial career. The struggle for the supremacy of the Baltic entered on its final phase. But the King of Prussia was now satisfied. Jealousy of his relatives at Herrenhausen (who were also sovereigns of Great Britain, and whom he disliked as cordially as they disliked him), fear of the aggrandizement of Hanover, which had obtained Bremen and Verden in the Swedish partition, and the complicated politics of the Empire made his foreign policy henceforth. Above all he had his eye on Jülich-Berg, that half of the original duchy of Cleves lost in 1614, which with its genealogical ramifications recurs like a nightmare in Prussian history. The ruler of the Neuburg line was childless; the Sulzbach line of the Palatinate claimed the inheritance. Frederick William, who loved peace all the more because he had a costly army of 70,000 men, did not wish to fight but to win by diplomacy.

The Jülich-Berg succession question.

Under the influence of Grumbkow and the Austrian representative Seckendorf, ignorant of history and utterly unfitted by temperament, habits, and knowledge of life to cope with the trained diplomatists of the chanceries, who very soon took the measure of his narrow understanding and saw that like all bullies he was a coward at heart, Frederick William stumbled into every trap. He was kept in loyal servitude to the House of Austria. Promised the succession in 1725, he was re-promised part of it in 1726, and guaranteed the Pragmatic Sanction of Charles VI; then suspecting that Vienna had gone back on its word, as it had, he tried direct negotiation and bribery with the Sulzbach claimant

and failed. A superb chance arose when the Polish throne became vacant in 1733, and his aid for the Habsburg candidate was indispensable. He was cajoled into letting it go, fought for the Habsburg in the War of the Polish Succession, and finally discovered in 1738 that the Third Treaty of Vienna which ended the war had also ended his chance of succeeding to Jülich-Berg. It only remained to explode with impotent rage. His policy is indeed a record of political imbecility—the strong, self-centred king, victimized by charlatans and able men of the world who had guessed truly that he was a lath painted to look like iron. 'Here,' he is credited with saying, 'here', pointing to the Crown Prince, whom the European powers had saved from being murdered by his father, 'is one who will avenge me.' It had, perhaps, dawned at last on the king's limited vision that if the Crown Prince had been, as he had striven so hard to make him, the copy of himself, the hopes of vengeance were futile. Fortunately for their kingdoms kings do not always have the children they deserve.

The army.

His army was the king's first and last care. He inherited a standing force of some 30,000 to 40,000 men, and by the end of the reign had increased it to 90,000, of whom 70,000 were field troops. Prussia, which ranked about twelfth in population of the European states, ranked fourth in the number of its army, and the strain that its maintenance imposed can be judged by its cost. Out of a revenue of some seven million thalers five million were spent on the army. This involved the working of the whole financial and civil administration of the state, apart from the special military machinery, to provide

the resources required. Economy, which was a passion with Frederick William, was immensely stimulated by the ever-growing needs of the army, and Prussia came to be regarded as a machine, the chief function of which was to furnish soldiers, officers, and their equipment.

The organization, finance, administration, and training of his troops were personally supervised by the king from the broadest principles of military service to the pettiest details. With the aid of Leopold of Dessau, 'the old Dessauer,' he worked out the drill book and the technical improvements, such as the ramrod and the new bayonet, the fine discipline both of infantry and artillery, the commissariat and transport, which under a commander of genius were to astonish Europe. Perfection of drill and manœuvring were achieved by continuous peace operations and a military code that bristled with the most brutal and degrading punishments. Up till 1733 the rank and file were obtained partly by voluntary enlistment, partly by compulsory service. After 1733 a rigorous system of cantonal conscription was set up by which the military districts were required to furnish quotas according to population, and this subsequently became the basis of the universal obligation to serve which was completed by the law of 1814. Under Frederick William various classes were exempted and the army was drawn mainly from the peasantry and officered by the nobility, though throughout the eighteenth century large numbers continued to be recruited by voluntary enlistment. The maintenance of agriculture and the agricultural population was therefore a prime necessity. The manorial feudal economy, which riveted villein and

serf to the soil, put the labourer at the disposal of the manorial lord, the king or the Junker, and provided the officer class to whose authority the caste system and social habit had accustomed the peasantry, was the basis of conscription and of the Prussian army. Reform, therefore, in that agrarian economy would have upset the whole military machine, and with it the whole system of government. The position of the privileged Junker was as indispensable as the dependence of the unprivileged and oppressed serf. The foundation of the Cadettenhaus at Berlin by Frederick William—the state institution for training the sons of the nobility to be officers—illustrates the central conception, that service in the army was the chief duty of the noble and squire and the reward of the political and social status so rigorously maintained for the noble caste. Not even Frederick the Great could conceive of the army he required being raised, drilled, officered, and maintained in any other way than by stereotyping and keeping intact, at whatever price, the social and agrarian economy of a mediaeval feudalism. The premisses and postulates of political and social administration and of civil life were deep-rooted in this system, tampering with which involved the subversion of the position and prerogatives of the sovereign quite as seriously as of the position and prerogatives of Junkertum. The noble served as a noble, the serf as a serf—between that and the idea of a common *citizenship* in which each would serve as a citizen lay a revolution in political and economic thought and a revolution in machinery and the conception of the end and the functions of the state. 'The enlightened absolutism' did not effect the transition either of thought,

principle, or action; when it came it was caused by disaster, and was the product of brains and characters which found their inspiration neither at Berlin nor in the principles of enlightened absolutism. For the eighteenth-century Hohenzollerns, dominated to the end by the structure and idea of a state which they held to be as essential a part of the law of the universe as their own irresponsible authority, the task was by efficiency to squeeze the maximum of result from this system.

Civil administration: the General Directory.

'You can tell the Prince of Anhalt', said Frederick William, 'that I am the Field Marshal and the Finance Minister of Prussia.' To complete the unity of the civil machinery and reproduce in it the unity and control established in the army was the king's object—to make his sovereignty, in his own memorable phrase, as solid as bronze ('Ich stabilire die Souveraineté wie einen Rocher von Bronce'). 'I am the master, the gentlemen are my servants,' 'No arguing, the man is my subject,' are two out of many sayings which illustrate his principles. And the ordinance of 1723—a code of civil administration and administrative law—completed the reorganization of the machinery and grouped the whole in a carefully graded centralization. The apex was the general directory of five ministers (General- Ober- Finanz- Kriegs- und- Domainen-Directorium) which united the upper departments, hitherto distinct, of the Treasury, War, and Demesne administration. Beneath this stood the provincial departments, and beneath them the provincial chambers, while the base was the administration of the towns and of the Landrat in the more numerous agrarian communities. The chief characteristic of this

hierarchy of officials was its collegiate organization, i. e. it worked through boards or colleges, each of which constituted a bureau with its paid staff. The king presided in the Directory and a link was provided with the privy council by the royal cabinet, whose members were generally two in number, and who acted as secretaries, the channels for the communication of the royal will and the organs for preparing or sifting the business. Hence the king at the head had all the levers under his hand, and he could originate, supervise, and control every administrative act.

Frederick William's function in life was to make the machine work up to the maximum of its efficiency and in a harmonized unity. As he wrote in his code, 'The gentlemen will say it is impossible, but they must put their heads to it, and we herewith command them peremptorily not to argue but to make it practicable'. The king's eye, the king's presence, and the king's cane were everywhere. The king's civil service was like the army, an organ for discipline, obedience, and performance. Slackness or indiscipline was tantamount to desertion and to be punished accordingly. Woe to the offender, great or small, on whom the royal displeasure fell. Escape was impossible, resistance punishable. The final destruction or supersession of the Estates and Diets placed life, property, and work at the sovereign's disposal. His servants were required to work and were paid (a pittance) to work, and the rules and regulations left no loopholes for evasion, dishonesty, or incompetence.

Frederick made a first-rate steward of his estate. He knew its details from top to bottom. No matter was too

Results of the system.

trifling for his notice. He cut down the expenditure in the royal palace to the barest minimum, as he cut down working costs everywhere. Subjects, money, and produce —Prussia was regulated, hectored, bullied, legislated for, and punished, to get them in increasing numbers. The greater the taxable capacity, the more could be taken, the more work and labour extorted—and the army was always growing, crying out for more money, food, and men. The one luxury was the tall Potsdam grenadiers, and to obtain these Frederick William would have bartered a university or mortgaged an academy. Pages could be filled with the details of his remorseless administration, with the repeopling of waste lands, the immigration of foreign colonists, the extension of agriculture, and the encouragement of industries such as the woollen trade. In 1731 the king followed the Great Elector's example—it is the finest of his achievements—in offering Prussia as an asylum to the oppressed Protestants of Salzburg, whose sufferings were later immortalized in Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea*. Still, there is little doubt that in the twenty-seven years of Frederick William's reign the revenues of Prussia were doubled, a solid balance of savings was stored in the barrels of the Royal Treasury, and the material output of the kingdom perhaps trebled. Statistics are held to justify the king and the system. But in the criteria of politics the material test of quantity, apart from quality, is frequently the most fallacious ; it degenerates into a vulgarization of values and an insidious application of the crudest theories of force. The Prussia of 1640–1740 did not contribute one single first-rate mind to the civilization of herself or the world. Her

output in letters, science, the arts, is a virtual blank. Had she perished altogether, the world of mind and of spirit would not have been one whit the poorer. And such ideas, and not always the best ideas, as are traceable in her life were borrowed from other states. The synchronous history of the United Netherlands reminds us that small states, which wrest material prosperity from an unending struggle with nature and achieve marvels, if their rulers have penetrated to the deeper forces of human life and the conditions that nourish humanity, can also make a permanent contribution to civilization. Frederick William starved the universities, such as they were, and the academies of his kingdom. He did worse. He acted on the assumption that two-thirds of the strivings and achievements of the human mind and spirit were useless, had no rational purpose in the scheme of things, and were a source of weakness, not of strength. The travellers who entered his dominions have left on record the bleak and numbing air with the chill of fear and death that lay on the land. And Winckelmann, a Prussian born, who heralded the Renaissance of the eighteenth century, who fled from his inhospitable fatherland to become the inspirer of Lessing, Goethe, Wieland, and Schiller, wrote with truth 'that it was better to be a eunuch in a Turkish harem than a subject of the King of Prussia'. When Frederick William was dying they read to him his favourite hymn. At the words 'Naked I came into the world, and naked I shall leave it', the king broke in, 'No, no, I shall have my uniform.'

[The two best modern studies of the Great Elector are: M. Philippson, *Der grosse Kurfürst* (3 volumes. 1897–1903), and

A. WADDINGTON, *Le Grand Electeur* (2 vols. 1905–8). The standard works on administration are: C. BORNHAK, *Geschichte des Preussischen Verwaltungsrechts* (3 vols. 1884–92), and S. ISAACSOHN, *Geschichte des Preuss. Beamtentums.* Frederick I and Frederick William I can be conveniently studied in the general histories of STENZEL, DROYSEN, ERDMANNSDÖRFFER and v. ZWIEDENECK-SÜDENHORST. Of the memoirs: consult the first volume of FREDERICK'S *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la Maison de Brandebourg*; PÖLLNITZ, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des quatre derniers souverains de la Maison de Brandebourg* (1791); while the most convenient edition of the *Memoirs of Wilhelmina, Margravine of Baireuth* is in 1 vol. (1845). Carlyle's narrative of the whole of this period is a brilliant and characteristic *tour de force.*]

CHAPTER IV

FREDERICK THE GREAT, 1740–86

§ 1. Frederick from 1712 to 1745

Frederick's position.

Frederick the Great is and remains a European figure. As soldier, diplomatist, and administrator he is the most gifted and the ablest head, the most powerful and impressive personality of all the Hohenzollern rulers, who made the capital of his kingdom, Berlin, a centre of political thought and action comparable to Paris, Vienna, and London. He shares and surpasses the significance of the other great monarchs of the continent who were his contemporaries, Maria Theresia, Joseph II, and Catherine II. In the evolution of Prussia his long reign of forty-six years marks with deep red characters the dividing line between the German principality and the European power. Frederick's accession to the throne (May 31, 1740) was an interesting fact in German, and particularly North German, politics. His death on August 17, 1786, was a European event. A lamp in the political firmament had been extinguished, a brain had ceased to work, a will to exercise its dominating force.

Frederick's boyhood and education.

Frederick was born on January 24, 1712, and his mother was Queen Sophia Dorothea, sister of George II of Great Britain and Ireland. His boyhood and early manhood were spent under the sinister and numbing shadows of his father's court and tyranny. Until seven

years of age the little Crown Prince was in the hands of women; then his military training was undertaken by his father, with the aid of a tutor who was permitted to impart the rudiments and scraps of knowledge, such knowledge as would make him an intelligent sergeant, book-keeper, and farm bailiff. An eager, high-spirited, sensitive boy, with inborn longings for languages, letters, and the arts, capable of warm affections, and with an inherent love for the beautiful and the refined, and an inexhaustible intellectual curiosity, was condemned to suffer every brutality both to mind and body, to have every aspiration and desire flogged into silence and if possible extirpated by degrading punishment. French, Latin, and the flute he only learned by stealth, and at the price of bodily pain and boorish contempt; English he never learned at all. Of a home and all that a home can mean Frederick was ignorant. He grew to manhood starved and ill-treated, a life that was an unending round of repellent and brutalizing tasks, habituated to deceit, and dominated by fear. Many years after, when the master of Prussia was a famous figure in the world he related how in a dream his father appeared to him, as at the Wusterhausen of his teens, and he awoke in a cold and dripping sweat of terror. Is it surprising that by manhood the iron had burnt itself into his soul, that the Crown Prince, taught the lessons of a militarized and irresponsible autocracy in the atmosphere of the illiterate and inhuman barrack of the Prussian court, should have been convinced by a damnably royal persistence that womanhood, love, loyalty, generosity, charity, chivalry, ideals were the playthings of the mocking gods; that human

virtues, like human vices, were simply counters in the relentless game of destiny; that God, freedom, and immortality were the superstition of obscurantist priest and pastor, or baffling riddles? Of stupidity, ignorance, treachery, cruelty, tyranny, coarse animalism he knew far too much—of sympathy very little, of happiness nothing. The Crown Prince, holding out eager hands to the fire of life, found no warmth, but a hard clear light and that only to be seen through tears.

The training of the Crown Prince.

At eighteen he could endure his existence and the uniform that was his shroud no longer, and he attempted to escape, whither he cared not. But he was stopped, brought back, condemned by a characteristically diabolical device of his father to witness the execution of his companion, Lieutenant Katte, the one friend he had in the world, and after his own life had been spared, thanks to the intervention of the European courts, his training began afresh. He was placed under the care of three nobles, commanded to refuse to discuss with him or let him have anything to do with any subject but 'the Word of God, the constitution of the land, manufactures, police, agriculture, accounts, leases and lawsuits'. Frederick had learned one terrible lesson. Escape was impossible, but his father could be fooled and outwitted. He acquired a gradual liberty by complete hypocrisy; outwardly he professed obedience, drilled, attended sermons, wrote elaborate reports in bad German, and worked enough to hoodwink the tyrant. But he was the Crown Prince, and all knew that some day in God's Providence he would be king and master, able to dismiss and reward with a word or a stroke of the pen. Frederick

found, was not surprised to find, men who would connive, women, high and low, willing to purchase the favour of the heir. His father insisted on marriage. He obeyed, and 'an innocent German insipidity', the pious and commonplace Elizabeth of Brunswick-Bevern, was selected to be his unhappy wife. It was a fine match for her, and the brilliant, gay, and high-spirited Crown Prince may have meant much to the young bride. She meant nothing to him but the will of an odious parent. In due course she became Queen of Prussia, in name, but she had no place in his hearth, his pleasure, his duty, or his ambition. He never shared with her one thought, one aspiration, one hope or fear. In the agony of the Seven Years' War, when ruin stared him in the face, he neither sought nor expected comfort, still less strength for his titanic struggle, in a woman's devotion. And she, poor queen, was the wife of the greatest king of the century: on his side a formal courtesy and icy silence; for her, isolation, resignation, and the consolation of a religion that her king and husband despised and derided.

Frederick's character.

At Cüstrin and then at Rheinsberg (1736–40) Frederick learned the Prussian machine and the necessity of work; but he could also make leisure and he spent it, sometimes in dissipation ('I am for enjoyment, afterwards I despise it'), but always in reading, scribbling French poetry, in history, French literature, theatricals, music, corresponding with Voltaire and other luminaries, and in much thinking. His *Anti-Machiavel*, a refutation of Machiavelli's *Prince*, was an academic and youthful exercise, on which his life and career as king are the most telling commentary. What he might have been under another

father and in a cleaner and richer air we can only guess. That he retained his spirits, his confidence in himself, his intellectual buoyancy and social charm is an astonishing proof of the quality of fibre in his mind and body. In 1740 what he retained and had acquired were due to himself—for what he had lost and the perverted conviction that perhaps it was no loss, Frederick William I was responsible. His heart had withered up. Intellectual intimates, men whose knowledge or force of brain appealed to his head, ideas and the exchange of ideas, music, books, the service of soldiers, administrators, engineers —these he valued and was to know in abundance, but of charity, generosity, faith in the humanity that joy and sorrow can enrich he felt no need. He never had a friend, either man or woman. Friendship as a bond of human souls was unnecessary—a temptation to weakness. Duty, which became his watch-word, was work without love or pity, the categorical imperative of a universal reason, not the daughter of God. Religion, Protestant or Catholic, was like court ceremonies, a waste of time, the invention of priests, a dupery for women, an instrument to be manipulated by the ruler for purposes of state. In the famous formula of his toleration—Every one in this kingdom shall go to heaven in his own way—there rings beneath the principle of political expediency the veiled contempt of the crowned sceptic. If there was a heaven, let the fools or drones of humanity find it without hindrance; for the wise and strong—for the ruler above all—there was more rational work.

Frederick's political philosophy.

Frederick in 1740 inherited a well-filled treasury, a large and well-drilled army, an autocracy undisputed

and indisputable. Men and women soon learned that if some salutary changes were made at once, gratitude had no place in the new king's character. He expected and insisted on unqualified obedience. He intended to be field-marshal and treasurer of Prussia. The new monarch was absolute; but he was not an illiterate martinet. He was a brain, disciplined in the dictates and service of reason. Policy and the state would henceforth be governed and interpreted in the clear light of that reason, which alone made the world and human conduct intelligible and tolerable. Frederick is the only Hohenzollern who definitely rejected the Protestant faith of his House, the teachings of which had no personal meaning for himself. As a political fact and force in Germany or elsewhere Protestantism was a calculable reality, like other irrational realities in a world of chaotic human passions. Its maintenance or its exploitation must be weighed and reckoned with. But the true ruler would find his inspiration and guidance in an enlightened reason, infallible to all who sought its truth undimmed by affection and superstition and unhampered by the meshes of human weaknesses. In the Temple of Reason the king was the arch high-priest, whose duty was to purge it of the idols of the tribe, the market-place and the palace. Power was justified and only justifiable if used to promote a rational well-being, to transmute into gold the leaden metal of humanity, and to drill the human will to realize a rational life. Hence power must be as unlimited as reason. Frederick's enlightened absolutism, of which he became the incarnation in the eyes of an admiring century, was subtly and inextricably blended

with the ambition of the Hohenzollern and the pride of the Prussian king. Frederick identified himself completely with Prussia; the power and prosperity of Prussia were at once the end of enlightened reason and flawless title-deeds of rational government. Enlightenment would make Prussia strong. The strength of Prussia would be the triumph of reason.

On the threshold of his reign Frederick was as yet inexperienced and ignorant of great affairs on the great scale. His knowledge of war was limited to the parade-ground and books; of diplomacy in the grand sense and of states and those who rule them he knew nothing at first hand. It is one of the most suggestive facts in his life that he never travelled, and, with some trifling exceptions, his knowledge even of Germany outside Prussia was confined to his campaigns. His judgement of France, Italy, Russia, England, the House of Austria was based on events, paper reports, and the principles of his theory of life and system of policy. Like the Great Elector he was a learner all his life. His power of work, his concentrated industry, were only matched by the interpretation of his experience in the terms of his creed of conduct.

Frederick and Europe, 1740.

In 1740 Europe was on the verge of a new epoch. The Anglo-French Alliance had worn itself out; the Anglo-Spanish War of 1739 had reopened the problem of empire for Great Britain, and the ambitions of a consolidated Bourbonism were in the ascendant. The second great chapter of the Anglo-French duel was about to open. For Frederick, ambitious to make himself a figure in the world and to increase the dominions of his House, who

had inherited the fiasco of the Jülich-Berg succession, the death of the Emperor Charles VI (October 20) was decisive. 'This,' he wrote, truly enough, 'is the moment of the entire transformation of the old system of politics.' There was no male heir of the House of Habsburg to inherit the imperial crown. The heiress of the Habsburg dominions, of which the duchy of Silesia would form so valuable an accession to the kingdom of Prussia, was the young Archduchess Maria Theresia, whose succession was guaranteed by the Pragmatic Sanction, ratified by all the important European states. Her husband was Francis of Lorraine, who, according to the Habsburg plans, was to succeed Charles VI as Emperor, and continue the imperial crown in the House of Habsburg-Lorraine.

Silesia.

Frederick's two Silesian wars are the first phase of his career; they epitomize the principles of his action and they illustrate strikingly his combination of war and diplomacy, his conviction that 'negotiations without arms are music without instruments'. The need and advantage of Prussia to be met by the cession of Silesia were a solid justification of conquest. Force and a suitable opportunity were the other essential prerequisites. Musty Hohenzollern claims on the coveted duchy were easily vamped up from the archives of the chancery. Prussia's guarantee of the Pragmatic Sanction was considered and dismissed. A pledge given by his successor under different circumstances could not weigh against reasons of state, the morality of which was independent of and superior to the personal honour of the sovereign. Maria Theresia was in difficulties; Prussia was ready and she was not. Ambition, as he confessed later, whispered to

a listening ear. He could succeed by a rapid and unexpected blow. But with a cynical coolness that it is difficult to parallel, he informed Vienna that he had the will and power to take Silesia, and that if they would yield it up he would procure the imperial crown for Francis, stand by Maria Theresia and the Pragmatic Sanction against the world; but if not offered with a good grace, the enemies of the House of Habsburg would be his friends and allies. This proposal of robbery, punctuated by blackmail, was rejected with noble scorn, and Frederick crossed the borders at the head of his troops. His action precipitated a European war.

The Silesian wars.

The First Silesian War was fought to win Silesia, the Second to keep it. Frederick had a clearly defined object. He needed allies, but their object was not his. He had no intention of treating them any better or any worse than he had treated Maria Theresia. They could be his tools, but he would not be theirs. The campaign did not go, however, as smoothly as he had expected. Glogau was secured on March 9, 1741, but the first pitched battle very nearly ended in disaster at Mollwitz (April 5). It was won not by Frederick, for the despairing king had galloped to Oppeln, thirty miles away, but by Schwerin and Frederick William I, whose training of the Prussian infantry wrested success from defeat. Mollwitz brought him the alliance of France and Bavaria. Frederick undertook to vote for the Elector Charles Albert as successor to Charles VI. The House of Austria was in sore straits. Frederick threw over his allies and agreed to the secret convention of Klein Schnellendorf (October 1741) by which Prussia in return

for neutrality was to have Lower Silesia. French and Bavarian successes convinced him rapidly that 'the true principles of the policy of my House' demanded a renewal of the alliance with France which would add Upper Silesia to Lower. He broke the secret convention and invaded Moravia. He was compelled to retreat through Bohemia and saved the situation for himself by the first of his great victories at Chotusitz (May 17, 1742). Under pressure from England and to free her hands to deal with France and Bavaria, Maria Theresia bought Frederick off. Chotusitz had done his work. By the Treaty of Berlin (July 28) Silesia with the county of Glatz was ceded in full sovereignty to the King of Prussia. Frederick having acquired what he had set out to win by arms and diplomacy combined, threw his allies over for the third time and retired from the war. Had he not justified himself? For if Maria Theresia had been wise, she would have made the Treaty of Berlin in November of 1740, and Mollwitz and Chotusitz would have been victories over France and Bavaria.

An interval of peace, 1742–4.

Cardinal Fleury, the experienced French minister, had pronounced the King of Prussia to be false, even in his caresses. Frederick knew perfectly well that as he trusted no one, no one trusted him. He set to work to assimilate his new acquisition into the organized unity of his kingdom; but he also filled up the gaps in his army, profited by his experience to introduce a series of military reforms, particularly in the cavalry, and watched lynx-eyed the diplomatic and military situation. The Austrian military star was steadily rising; the Treaty of Worms riveted Austria's allies in fresh bonds, and the Bavarian

Emperor was being hard pressed. Silesia would be lost if France and Bavaria were defeated. Frederick promptly formed the Union of Frankfort composed of some of the minor German princes, and renewed his alliance with France in consideration of obtaining a share in the partition of Bohemia. He proclaimed as his object the restoration of liberty to the Empire; but he was fighting to keep Silesia (August 7, 1744).

The Second Silesian War, 1744-5.

By September 16 he had captured Prague; a stroke to the south failed and he was driven to a humiliating retreat back to Silesia. The French in the spring of 1745 invaded the Austrian Netherlands (Belgium), and Frederick was left to save himself. A smashing victory at Hohenfriedberg (June 5, 1745) over Austrians and Saxons freed Silesia of invasion and was followed by a counter-invasion of Bohemia. Frederick won a hard-fought battle at Soor; once more, however, he had to fall back on Silesia, whence he turned on the Saxons and defeated them at Hennersdorf (November 23), while the old Dessauer inflicted another defeat on them at Kesselsdorf (December 15), and Frederick entered Dresden. He had already (August 26) concluded with England the Convention of Hanover, by which, in return for Silesia guaranteed by Europe, he undertook to vote for Maria Theresia's husband at the Imperial election made necessary by the death of the Bavarian emperor. He had nothing to hope for from France whom he had thus deserted, and England, in the throes of the Jacobite rebellion, exerted all her pressure to persuade the Austrians to recognize that Silesia could not be recovered by force of arms. Maria Theresia gave way with extreme reluctance.

The Treaty of Dresden (December 25, 1745) ended the Second Silesian War. It confirmed the Treaty of Berlin and the Convention of Hanover. To Frederick, whose treasury was empty and army grievously battered by two years of bloody but successful war, peace was doubly welcome. The liberty of the empire, whatever that might mean, must take care of itself. Francis of Lorraine could become emperor. But Frederick had kept Silesia.

§ 2. Internal Organization, the Reversal of Alliances, and the Seven Years' War, 1745–63

Frederick from 1745–56.

The eleven years that intervene between the Treaty of Dresden and the outbreak of the Seven Years' War are the most instructive of the reign. Frederick was in the prime of his physical and mental powers; he had added to his kingdom a duchy covering 15,500 square miles and containing 1,250,000 inhabitants, an area of great industrial and agricultural value and providing him with a fine strategic bastion alike against Saxony and the House of Austria; moreover, in 1744, by prompt action he had forestalled rival competitors, Hanover in particular, and annexed East Friesland, with its growing port of Emden; in diplomacy and in war he had proved himself to be a commander of men and a master of events; his armed and incalculable egoism had struck home as a force; the sun was in the heavens, and the sorrows, disillusionment, and superhuman strain of the titanic battle for existence had not as yet cast the shadows that were never to leave him. To a personality and brain such as Frederick's,

with his amazing power of work, his accessibility to ideas, his intellectual capacity for enjoying the power of reason in the ordering of life, and for assimilating the literature and civilization of distinguished minds, and for adapting to the most practical use the rich and varied experience of five years of war and negotiation in the centre of the European system, this period of peace inspired the highest gifts and quality of the king. He was not yet the historic figure of fame and of achievement—the incarnation of Prussia's past, present, and future for the generations to come—but without these years of devotion to the lessons of the Silesian campaigns and to the maturing and digested thought welling up with his own mental growth he could never have become Frederick the Great. He is at his best in these eleven years, and so far as he found happiness he found it in them.

Frederick's work.

The amount of work and the range of his activities were prodigious, and only accomplished by the sternest ideal of his duties as king, by an austere self-mastery which inevitably hardened all that was hard in soul and body, and by a mechanical apportionment of a long day that left no room for rest. He desired to be and he made himself the brain of his kingdom. It was his function to think, it was for his servants and subjects to act and carry out his thought. Frederick combined, as perhaps Napoleon alone of modern rulers combined, the duties of a supreme commander-in-chief, foreign minister, treasurer, and head of the civil administration. His was the executive will, but his was also the reflective brain concerned with principles as much as with execution and detail. But his thinking was not confined to the

more obvious branches of an organized and co-ordinated state life. In expert knowledge of every department or province he was the director of the specialized staff; he knew his dominions from end to end; his cold and critical blue eyes penetrated every secret and every corner; peasant and burgher, the woman in the fields, merchant or artisan, landrat or councillor of a provincial chamber, pastor or monk, the soldier in the ranks, junker or general, had seen the figure in the worn blue uniform stained with snuff, knew the musical voice, trembled at that icy displeasure or contemptuous reprimand, much more rarely heard the brief assent which signified a dry approval. The privileged of the circle of Sans-Souci saw another Frederick, witty, gay, profane, brilliant, a critic of life polished to a glittering adamant. But for all and for everything, whether it was a village pound, a new canal, a new way of planting beetroot, an opera house for Berlin, a prima ballerina, the new oblique order in minor or major tactics, Maria Theresia's feminine bigotry, Kaunitz's latest foppery, an amour of the Tzarina Elizabeth, or Voltaire's latest work, Frederick was the Grand Intelligence. How the king worked and made others work, all his subjects knew—but he was always the king, and for Prussia and finally for Europe enlightened absolutism came to be identified with the personality of this royal master.

The army.

The army was his first and last care. If *toujours en vedette* was his maxim in foreign affairs, 'ready to the gaiter-button' was his maxim for the army. The Silesian campaigns had revealed defects in officers, men, equipment, numbers, and in the commander-in-chief himself. For eleven years he toiled to make good these defects.

The numbers of the peace force were raised to 135,000, with an expansion capacity up to 200,000. Training was continued with increased rigour; reforms in the Cadettenhaus, in the military education of the officer corps, in technical equipment, in the cavalry and artillery and in tactics were pushed through. Most important of all, Frederick took his own military education sternly in hand. He had grasped, with all the soldiers who belong to the first division of the first class, that an army must have a brain of the higher order, and that if officers and rank and file cannot be improvised, still less can the brain of a commander be improvised; and in these eleven years the world only saw the manœuvres and the king on horseback, but they did not see the hours and days spent in his study on military history and military thought, the travail of an intellect toiling at intellectual problems, any more than they shared the silence of absorption in the science of war which made von Moltke and von Blumenthal. The Europe of the middle of the eighteenth century forgot that the military mind of the King of Prussia was also wrestling with the problems of diplomacy and administration, and with the problems of life under self-denying conditions that were forging and tempering the cells of the spirit no less than the cells of the brain. War to Frederick was a branch of the service of life as well as a branch of the service of the state: it was indissolubly linked with the other services of life and of the state; mastery of its secrets was a mastery of life which would be revealed to an enlightened human reason ready to pay the price and obey the service that science, the fruit of reason, demanded. The army was

Prussia and Prussia was her army. If reason enjoined a duty on a Hohenzollern and a Prussian king, here it was, categorical and clear. 'I am the first servant of the state,' he pronounced. And from his conception of his duty as the first servant of the Prussian state he permitted neither pain nor pleasure, neither fatigue nor the carnal passion for ease, neither church nor critic, no praise and no blame, no hope of heaven, no fear of hell to make him flinch. The service of the state was his religion; it justified the mundane scheme of things, its commandments were the law for his personal conduct, and for him the state was Prussia.

Civil administration.

In civil administration he accepted the framework which he had inherited. He aimed neither at reconstructing principles nor reinterpreting ends, but simply at perfecting machinery. To the four departments of the General Directory he added two—one for Trade and Manufactures, another for Military Affairs. The 'Foreign Office' and Justice formed separate bureaux, no less under the king's personal supervision. Silesia, assimilated to the Prussian system, was kept as a separate department. With the help of the distinguished jurist, Cocceji, he swept away a number of abuses in the administration of justice, simplified the procedure, cheapened litigation, and strove to make the courts purer and more efficient. But his name is not associated, as is Napoleon's, with a great code, embodying the best and most scientific ideas, though it could have been done with Cocceji's help. At every point in Frederick's work he was limited and held up by three impregnable barriers—the needs of the army, the prerogative and status of the

monarchy, the social economy. The army absorbed 8,500,000 out of a revenue of 11,000,000 thalers; a great code would have revolutionized the royal prerogative and the privileges of the nobility, and have meant taking the state to pieces and building it up again. Efficiency in finance was the sum of his efforts, the provision of a revenue that would keep the army and the state, and provide a balance to be stored up as a reserve. Frederick had before his mind, night and day, the conduct and conditions of a big war. Prussia was poor; she had neither the financial machinery of an industrial state nor the assets on which to borrow; she must, therefore, have reserves in men, money, food, and equipment in order to be self-sufficing. Necessity, as well as his own reasoned convictions, made him a narrow mercantilist in economic principles and practice. Wealth was so many barrels of thalers piled up in his treasury; tariffs, bounties, prohibitions must be freely used to encourage the growth of crops, the breeding of beasts, the development of those industries that would make Prussia absolutely independent of friend or foe.

Frederick and the new age.

Within the limitations of this creed, and the categories of his interpretation of political force and strength, he achieved marvels in the cheapness and efficiency of his administration, in the increase of productive power, but the limitations were the direct outcome of the system he inherited and his unqualified acceptance of it. Early in life he had assimilated from French thought the evangel of enlightenment and subjugated to it the monarchical absolutism and political ambitions of the Prussian sovereign, but outside this clearly marked sphere

he declined to allow his mind to move freely. Already before 1756 that mind had ceased to grow. Its power remained; his experience grew richer and richer; but he was no longer accessible to new and fertilizing thought. Ideas, movements, forces, ideals which challenged or were in conflict with his own systematized interpretation of men and things he simply ceased to consider on their merits or dismissed them as impossible or erroneous. He failed to see, though the Seven Years' War itself heralded the new age, that a new world of thought and feeling was coming into existence, a new France, of which Voltaire was not the representative, a new Germany, a new England, even a new House of Austria, and that he who had been abreast of, and in sympathy with, the most potent thought of his day was no longer in touch, and presently would be behind, the best spiritual and intellectual life even of a rationalist Europe. The closer and more detailed the survey of his administrative achievements, the clearer is the conclusion that Frederick, in the upper ranges of state architecture, exhibits neither originality of conception nor profundity of insight, while the limitations of his creed are concealed by the glamour of his personality and the concentration of power on results that must always be impressive.

Foreign policy.

Frederick's reading of Prussia's internal needs was greatly strengthened by his sleepless study of the European situation and the relations of the great states. The Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle (1748) ended the war of the Austrian Succession, but it settled none of the great issues involved, and Frederick alone was contented with the result. France, Great Britain, and the House of Austria were

profoundly dissatisfied with the selfish policy and half-hearted help of their respective allies. The great duel between France and Great Britain for colonial empire and the supremacy of the seas had no interest for Frederick; and he was not reconstructing and strengthening his army or husbanding every thaler to be France's tool in a continental struggle while she fought England in Canada, West or East Indies, and on the water. Nor was he planning another Silesian adventure. Frederick was not the victim of a megalomaniac ambition, nor a lover of conquest for conquest's sake. But he realized with absolute clearness that Prussia's action and success had shaken the European state system, and that Prussia and her king were disliked, distrusted, and feared. He had dislocated the balance of power, and his diplomacy and army had exemplified most disquieting principles and a formidable efficiency. Frederick said that he would not henceforward attack a cat, but he was ready and determined to arm cats and dogs to maintain the position he had won. Any further disturbance of the balance of power in Germany must, in Prussia's interest, be resisted. Bismarck never said anything more Frederician in spirit than the remark that the pike in the European pond prevented Prussia from remaining a carp. And the Prussian pike had filched and was growing stronger on its rival's preserves.

Maria Theresia and Kaunitz.

France and Great Britain were drifting, after 1748, into war, and neither at Versailles nor at St. James's were the governing minds grappling with the problem of how to avert, or how to succeed in, the next great struggle. Not so Vienna. Maria Theresia regarded Frederick as

a robber. His action had wounded and humiliated a woman's honour and pride; his success challenged the historic prestige and position of the House of Habsburg. Justice demanded his punishment, political ethics his political humiliation. She meant to recover Silesia, and she found in Anton von Kaunitz the diplomatic brain, as fertile in resource, as cunning in fence, and as persistent as Frederick himself. Under Kaunitz's guidance the House of Austria set to work to reform the army, and to revise the principles of Habsburg policy and foreign relations. Kaunitz's central conception was to form an irresistible coalition against Prussia, and, while not dispensing with Great Britain, her traditional ally, to reverse the whole traditional system of an irreconcilable antagonism between Bourbon and Habsburg by an alliance with France. By 1754 the coalition was in train. Versailles had begun to listen.

The Convention of Westminster.

Frederick had discovered through his agents and secret service what was afoot. Maria Theresia could rely on Saxony and Russia, but Prussia was in alliance with France. Two great wars were rolling up. Between England and France—between Austria and Prussia—France was the common factor, for France could utilize Prussia to attack Hanover. To save Hanover England made with Frederick the Convention of Westminster (January 16, 1756), which secured Prussia's protection of the electorate. That convention made Prussia useless to France in the war with Great Britain that had practically broken out in 1755. Kaunitz's diplomacy achieved a great triumph when on May 1, 1756, France signed a defensive alliance with Austria. It only remained to

convert the defensive into an offensive alliance, and the ring round Frederick would be, as Kaunitz hoped, complete and overwhelming. Russia would attack in the north-east, France from the west, Saxony and Austria from the south.

Frederick declares war, 1756.

Frederick recognized the extent and gravity of the peril. He ignored the plain truth that his seizure of Silesia had made Maria Theresia an implacable foe, and was about to involve him in a struggle not merely to keep Silesia, but to maintain Prussia intact as a state. Was he to wait for the blow to fall, or to strike with all his might and shatter the coalition before it was fully formed? As in 1740 the army was ready, more ready indeed, and a finer army. He weighed all the issues and decided for the offensive. A peremptory ultimatum was sent to Vienna and received an evasive reply. On August 26, 1756, Frederick crossed into Saxony to clear his right flank for a decisive blow in Bohemia. He intended to maim Austria before the French or the Russians could intervene effectively. The Seven Years' War had begun.

The Seven Years' War.

A strange combination of circumstances, strangely influenced by accident, had brought about a complete reversal of the alliances on which the European system had hitherto rested. France, at war with England, was the ally of Austria; Austria, at war with Prussia, was the ally of France. An offensive alliance between Austria and France, England and Prussia, by which England and Austria, allies since 1689, would become open foes was inevitable. The treaty of May 1, 1757, made France a member of the anti-Prussian coalition. The Convention of Westminster was completed by the subsidy

treaties of 1757 and 1758. For Frederick, as for Maria Theresia, the issue was really very simple. Frederick represented the Court of Vienna as bent upon ruining the Protestant cause and establishing a despotism in the Empire. But it was enough for him that the defeat of Prussia meant dismemberment and the disappearance of the Prussian state as he had made it, while victory meant the continued existence of the Prussian state as a European power. We need not complicate the argument by elaborate speculation as to the more ambitious dreams that lay in Kaunitz's diplomacy. The victory of the coalition was to be rewarded by a reduction of Prussia, equivalent to a dismemberment. Had the coalition succeeded, the history of Germany and of the world would have been profoundly different from the history we know, though in what ways neither historian, philosopher, nor prophet would venture to say with confidence. Frederick fought the Seven Years' War that Prussia might have a future based upon her position and character in 1756. He fought for the salvation of Prussia, and the salvation of Prussia was the inspiration of his strategy and of his titanic efforts. As a national hero therefore he has a unique place. Without Frederick the struggle would have ended in disaster, and the final result was due even more to his adamantine and inexhaustible will and nerve than to his military genius.

The military situation.

As a chapter in military history the war is a treasury in lessons, but military history, if not studied in detail, is the most sterile of all subjects. It must suffice here to summarize the leading events. We may note, however, three considerations of importance. First, Frederick

occupied a central position, with flanks exposed to the Russians in the east and the French and the Austrian allies in the west. The English alliance after 1757 and the Anglo-Hanoverian army under Ferdinand of Brunswick with increasing effectiveness guarded Frederick's right flank. Secondly, Frederick started with an army qualitatively superior though numerically inferior to the forces of his enemies. But the first two campaigns decimated the superb instrument he had constructed, and from 1758 onwards the Austrian forces were steadily levelled up in quality, and the numbers of the coalition told with increasing heaviness against the king. Thirdly, apart from his military gifts Frederick had a unity of control. He was king, commander-in-chief, and foreign minister in one, and the simplicity and organization of the Prussian state machinery made this unity extraordinarily effective. Few wars have been waged in which the sovereign was the state in arms so literally as Frederick was Prussia in arms from 1756–63.

The campaigns of 1756 and 1757.

Neither in 1756 nor in 1757 did Frederick achieve his scheme. In 1756 Dresden was easily occupied, but a great stroke in Bohemia was foiled by Saxon resistance at Pirna. A bloody victory at Lobositz (October 1) did not annihilate the relieving Austrian army, and it was not until October 16 that the Saxons capitulated. The great stroke in Bohemia had to be postponed till next year. Russia and Sweden now joined the coalition as offensive partners, and in Germany Frederick could only rely on Hesse, Brunswick, and Gotha. In April of 1757 Frederick flung himself with the flower of his army on Bohemia, and after another bloody battle outside

Prague (May 6) drove the Austrian army back on the city. But a second relieving army was at hand, and at Kolin (June 18) the king's over-confidence and tactical blunders resulted in a costly defeat, and retreat was necessary. In the west the Duke of Cumberland and the Anglo-Hanoverian army had been defeated at Hastenbeck and compelled to sign the disastrous Convention of Kloster-Zeven (July 26), opening up the western flank; the Swedes had broken out from Pomerania, and the Russians had defeated a Prussian force at Gross-Jägersdorf (August 30), followed by another reverse at Görlitz (September 7). Crushing decisions alone could avert disaster. Frederick's genius rose to the crisis. At Rosbach (November 5) the Franco-Imperialist army was annihilated, and Frederick, hurrying back to Silesia, inflicted on the Austrians a punishing defeat at Leuthen. Breslau capitulated, and the enemy was cleared out of Silesia. Rosbach and Leuthen were tactical masterpieces, and put Frederick in the first class of the great commanders.

The campaign of 1758.

The next year, 1758, brought him an increased subsidy from Great Britain, a reorganized Anglo-Hanoverian army, a competent chief in Ferdinand of Brunswick, and, best of all, the supremacy of Pitt, determined to support Prussia through thick and thin and fight the French to a finish. Frederick once again struck at his main foe, the Austrians, by an invasion of Moravia, but the siege of Olmütz proved a failure, the Austrians under Daun refused a decisive engagement, and Frederick hurried back to avert the Russian peril. The sanguinary struggle at Zorndorf (August 25) was at best a drawn battle, and two months later Frederick, surprised at Hochkirch (Octo-

ber 24), was only saved by the excellence of his officers and men. The subsequent march to and relief of Neisse were a little masterpiece; but the army of 1756 no longer existed, and Frederick was reduced to the defensive.

The campaigns of 1759 and 1760.

1759, the year of victory for England—the year of Quebec, Minden, and Quiberon—was a year of disaster for Frederick. The Austrians refused a decision, and at Kunersdorf (August 12) the Russians, aided by the Austrian Laudon, inflicted on the over-confident king a terrible defeat. Dresden capitulated, and Finck and a Prussian army were surrounded and surrendered at Maxen (November 21). Prussia, as her king said, was only saved by a miracle or the 'divine stupidity' of his foes, who did not follow up their successes. In a ruined land, Frederick, with poison in his pocket, still fought on. The next year opened badly. At Landeshut (June 23) a Prussian force was wiped out; Glatz fell (July 26), and the Russians advanced to the Oder. At Liegnitz (August 15), however, Frederick defeated Laudon; and at Torgau (November 3) Daun was lured into risking a battle and was defeated. Liegnitz and Torgau explain the Austrian reluctance to fight pitched battles and the fear that Frederick's genius inspired.

The peace of 1763.

Talk of peace was now invading the European chanceries. Frederick's position seemed desperate. Pomerania was gone; the Russians occupied the New March; the Austrians were in Silesia; but Frederick would not listen to any proposals which involved cession of territory. Militarily he was on the defensive, marching and countermarching, to keep the enemy back without risking a great battle and a defeat that would be the *coup de grâce*. His

reputation and fertility of resource were such that he succeeded in achieving the impossible. Throughout 1760 the king existed on his prestige and moral power. Laudon stormed Schweidnitz (October 1), but a more serious loss was Pitt's retirement (1761) and the passing of the control in London to an inexperienced and self-confident young king and his agent Bute, more anxious to defeat the Whigs than to crush France and save Prussia. On January 6, 1761, Frederick had virtually decided peace must be won by a cession of territory, when on January 19 the Tzarina Elizabeth died, and the new Tzar turned from the coalition against, to alliance with, Prussia. Though the Tzar was deposed on July 18, his wife Catherine, who became Tzarina, intended to be neutral. Frederick stormed Burkersdorf (July 21), and recovered Schweidnitz (October 9), while his brother Henry, the one general in Frederick's judgement 'who never made a mistake', won a victory at Freiberg. Silesia had been cleared of the foe. The death of Elizabeth and the accession first of Peter and then of Catherine, had more than compensated for Bute's dropping of the British subsidy and bungling management of the peace negotiations. Every one was ready to come to terms, and on February 15, 1763, the Treaty of Hubertusburg ended the war for Frederick. He undertook to vote for the Archduke Joseph as the successor to his father to the imperial crown, and obtained a confirmation of the treaties of Dresden and Breslau. Silesia and the county of Glatz were to remain Prussian. The great coalition had failed. Frederick emerged from the war without yielding a yard of territory or a stone of his fortresses.

§ 3. Prussia from 1763–86

Results of the Seven Years' War.

If the peace of Hubertusburg was, on the face of it, no more than a registration of the *status quo* of 1756, it was in reality a personal and a political triumph for Frederick. The apparently overwhelming combination of Sweden, Russia, the House of Austria, its German allies, and France, had signally failed to achieve their object, the humiliation and reduction of Prussia. In Maria Theresia's eyes Satan had won at Berlin; Silesia was lost for ever; the House of Austria had not recovered its position, and must reckon perpetually with the House of Hohenzollern and a Prussia, rooted in the north, which would challenge the supremacy of Austria and her policy in the empire. All that Frederick and Prussia stood for—the military state, the enlightened absolutism, a tolerant Protestantism, a public law, the sanction of which rested on force and efficiency, a ruthless egoism as the mainspring of policy—had been re-baptized by the blood of battle and the ink of the treaty. That Frederick could not have accomplished what he had without the alliance of Great Britain is obvious. The defeat of France, the British subsidy, and the Anglo-Hanoverian army—and it is no depreciation of Frederick's marvellous efforts to state it plainly—had saved him from disaster. Frederick, as a critic of British policy, was fully entitled to argue that British self-interest really required that Great Britain should continue the struggle until Prussia had been rewarded by substantial annexations. But on his own principles he put himself out of court by denouncing Great Britain for action which he would have regarded as treachery in a Prussian

sovereign. Frederick's system assumed that egoism, ruthless and enlightened, was the sole justifiable criterion of state action, with the consequence that if the English interest came into conflict with the Prussian, for England her interest alone must prevail. On the worst interpretation England only repeated the clear example of the Silesian campaigns, the abandonment of an alliance when it ceased to be profitable or necessary. Moreover, between 1758 and 1762 Frederick had shown that he was ready, without scruple or hesitation, to throw over the British or any other alliance, and to conclude a separate peace with any and every power which would grant the terms he judged desirable. The plain truth is that Frederick applied one set of canons to the judgement of his neighbours and another to the judgement of himself. Prussian needs proved Prussia's action to be right and all opposition to it wrong, and he made the welkin ring with bitter denunciation if friend or foe accepted and worked out the only code which he allowed to have any binding force on himself. But for all who decline to accept egoism as a basis of state action, bolstered up by Reason of State, and armed with force, who dismiss Frederick's argument in 1763 as an invalid conclusion drawn from false premisses, it must suffice here briefly to point out first that England did not 'desert' Prussia, and, secondly, that a study of the detailed diplomacy of 1762 and 1763 shows that she insisted on and obtained the cession by France of all Prussian territory in French occupation. The substitution of Bute for Pitt was in every way regrettable, if for no other reason than that it displaced a genius by a mediocrity. Frederick's services were recognized in

Great Britain. It was at Berlin that the world was taught that gratitude was a weakness in a ruler, and had no place in the ethics of statecraft.

Frederick reached the zenith of his fame in 1763. The magic of the king's personality was blended with the impressive solidity of his military and political organization, which had enabled Prussia to survive the onslaught of a great coalition. The Prussian state no less than the Prussian army cast its spell over the mind of Europe. Frederick, as the incarnation of a system, became the model for all who would do the like. At Vienna and Petersburg two young rulers, Joseph and Catherine, saturated in the rationalism that had produced enlightened absolutism, frankly admitted their debt to Sans Souci, while for thirty years Frederician strategy and tactics dominated military thought. But in 1763 Frederick himself had suffered as much as his kingdom. He had lost in the war the only two women—his mother and his sister Wilhelmina, Margravine of Baireuth—who had ever touched his heart. The physical and mental strain of the colossal struggle had stamped with an indelible imprint body and spirit. The unconquerable will, indeed, remained, but buoyancy, elasticity, and gaiety had gone for ever, and the future stretched out in front of him, stripped of all grace and charm, set with unending problems and darkened by an increasing isolation and loneliness. The autocrat was more an autocrat than ever, but in the sunken blue eyes, in which the imperious fire was unquenchable, in the thin compressed lips so ready with a barbed epigram or a bitter cynicism, in the stoop of the shoulders, men could see indeed the victor of Rosbach and Leuthen, but not

Frederick in 1763.

the Frederick who had built Sans Souci in the sunshine of the dawn. This was a sovereign who had wrestled with death without fear and who now wrestled with life without hope, a master of political wisdom, perhaps, but not a master of comfort, or of joy.

Prussia in 1763.

Frederick saw his kingdom *in extremis*. Berlin had been raided three times by the foe; East Prussia had been devastated by the Russians and lost since 1758; Silesia had been the cockpit of five campaigns. The army had been cut to pieces, and discipline in the inferior soldiers of 1761 was only maintained by a savage repression. The treasury was empty; the coinage had been debased; ruin, misery, and waste prevailed where in 1756 had been prosperity and progress. The gigantic task of rebuilding might well have dismayed the stoutest heart, but Frederick's determination was fired and steeled by the complexity and gravity of his difficulties. More than ever it was his duty to be the brain and will of Prussia and to extort a prosperous and strong state from intractable human material and conditions that defied success. Prussia should be as she was before—she should have an invincible army, an agriculture, a revenue, industries, no matter what the effort cost his subjects or himself. For the twenty-three years that remained of his reign he toiled and compelled his subjects to toil with unflagging energy and grim self-sacrifice.

Prussia in 1786.

The result is the most telling commentary. At his death the revenue was 22 million thalers; he had saved and stored 51 million thalers, which would, he calculated, cover the cost of eight campaigns; the peace strength of the army was 150,000 men; the fortresses had been

rebuilt; magazines had been established and equipment provided for at least 200,000 men, and there was a comfortable balance each year between income and expenditure. Marshes had been drained, woods planted, waste cultivated, the number of cattle and horses very nearly doubled, and as a proof of Prussia's power the king had built himself a third palace (the New Palace) at Potsdam, the king to whom the apparatus of a royal court was a stupid luxury and who allowed only one-hundredth part of the state revenue and the profits of the royal estates to be spent on the personal maintenance of the monarchy.

Internal reorganization.

These remarkable results were not achieved without the most drastic economy and a ruthless interference with the liberty, property, and lives of every Prussian, from the king's ministers to the king's serfs. Economic policy was modelled more closely than ever on extreme mercantilist principles, the basis and working of which were crumbling away in the progress of scientific thought. The linen, woollen, silk, glass, porcelain, and sugar-refining industries were state creations and artificially fostered by every device that ingenuity and stern regulation could suggest. A state monopoly in tobacco, coffee, and salt was instituted in 1765 and 1766, and the organization (General-tabaks-administration) entrusted to French officials. The harshness and comprehensiveness with which this monopoly, an instrument for raising fresh revenue, was exercised, the inquisitorial control that it involved, and the horde of officials it employed, made it very unpopular and contributed in a very marked degree to make Frederick and his rule a burden that obliterated

the memory of the king's services. Cut off from the General Directory, the monopoly was a serious injury to the efficiency of the civil service, and while it increased the autocratic power of the sovereign it did so by increasing the power of the irresponsible cabinet officers. The experiments in the Levant Company, the Herring monopoly, and in the Marine Insurance (Seehandlung) proved failures. Frederick's policy, in fact, sterilized individual initiative, it taught industry to rely wholly on state inspiration and assistance; it multiplied the ever-increasing army of miserably paid state employees dependent on the central control at Berlin.

Frederick's limitations. Two far deeper defects underlay Frederick's system. Nothing was done to free the organization of society or the machinery of production, distribution, and consumption from the dead and mortifying fetters of the caste system. Industry was to be created without the creation of an industrial class, a task as hopeless as an attempt to create an army without creating educated officers and disciplined soldiers. Frederick, imprisoned in an antiquated economic creed and the postulates of autocracy which in the industrial and agrarian spheres were the reverse of enlightened, was disappointed at the results achieved, which he attributed to the accursed obstinacy and incompetence of humanity. But men will remain obstinate and stupid if a system denies the conditions indispensable for free action and requires them to cease to think and merely to absorb the thought that is imposed on them. Frederick forgot the lesson of his own life—that the assimilation of ideas involves minds that can assimilate. He ignored the truth that predigested

thought destroys or atrophies the machinery of mind even more surely than predigested food destroys the machinery of the stomach. Secondly, Frederick, more rigorously after than before 1763, made the Crown the single Grand Intelligence of the state. But what was he doing in these years to ensure that there should be a Grand Intelligence when the enlightened king was no longer there? It is frequently asserted that Frederick made the army, the civil service, and the economic administration mere machines: but they were machines adapted to carry out the will and thought of a highly-trained and cultivated brain, which never ceased to think and to inspire. No one knew better than Frederick that efficiency and enlightenment without a directing and enlightened mind were impossible and the most pernicious of superstitions. Machinery was only a means to achieve an end. It is the most regrettable and the most astonishing of his limitations that he took no steps to provide a successor to his brain as well as to his crown and authority: still more regrettable that from 1763 onwards the principles, reorganization, and working of the autocracy prevented any such brain coming into existence. He left his Prussia, to which he had devoted forty-six years of such toil and sacrifice as few monarchs in any age can show, at the mercy of an heir whose character had not been disciplined nor his mind educated, who had not even an adequate technical knowledge of the absolutist régime in the army and the state which he inherited—a ruler dependent on officials who had been taught the supreme duty of never thinking for themselves. Instead of a brain he left a series of political testaments

with no guarantee that any one would obey them. Even the illiterate Frederick William I had done better than this, for he had insisted that his heir should know his work from top to bottom. Yet Frederick was under no illusions about the perfection of the Prussian machine or its capacity to run by itself. His criticism of the shortcomings of his officers, both in the army and the civil service, increased in volume and bitterness as he aged. His orders and his memoranda were a perpetual indictment of their shortcomings in mind and in the performance of their duties. But like so many rulers to whom power is everything, and whose will to rule increases as the physical forces ebb, Frederick feared a rival authority in the state far more than he feared death. A corroding jealousy of youth, vigour, and independence secretly gnawed at his heart, as the ever-lengthening shadows of old age remorselessly chilled his blood. And in the deepening isolation of his laborious solitude his interpretation of life and humanity laid with every year a freezing hand on his spirit. He could command obedience, but save in his faithful dogs he could not command love or loyalty. For the lonely king Sans Souci was haunted with the ghosts of a vanished past. The collaborators of his prime were replaced by automata subjugated to his will. Did he not remember how he, the heir who owed no gratitude to father or sovereign, had outwitted the tyrant? Knaves, knaves, knaves, the world was full of knaves and rogues, of the idle, the incompetent, the wasteful, and the sensual. Roguery everywhere, at Paris, Petersburg, and Vienna, and in Berlin. The penalties of a creed which enthroned

a ruthless egoism in a universe of reason, strangely mocked by chance and marred by folly, which left no place for gratitude, unselfishness, pity, or love in policy or personal conduct, worked themselves out unseen and all the more terribly because they were not seen; and if Prussia paid the price, the great king had paid it twice over before Berlin and his subjects heard with relief that he was no more.

Foreign policy after 1763.

In Frederick's foreign policy, after 1763, it would be difficult to find traces of age or declining power. On the contrary it was the consummation of an enriched experience, a heightened fertility of resource and an unrepentant adherence to the principles and methods which vitalized his system. A vigilant exploitation of the shifting circumstances of the European situation, and a penetrating interpretation of the character of the rulers of the European states were never more effectively combined with a sleepless devotion to the interest of Prussia. The great war bequeathed a complicated legacy of problems. Frederick desired peace, and through peace to secure his position. War was a cruel gamble, the uncertainty of which not even genius and a matchless army could master. It was for a poor state like Prussia an unmitigated evil, only to be justified by the most imperious necessity. Frederick reconstructed his army and reconstituted his financial reserve, with a view not to fighting, but to avert fighting. Military strength was a warning to the adversary and a powerful arm to negotiations. The supreme task was to wrest from his rivals and the crowned caprice in human affairs the results of war through a diplomacy, double edged with bayonets and prestige. Frederick's

action showed clearly not merely that war for war's sake was no part of his system, but that it was the last card in the player's hand. But if so, then it must really be a trump card. Internal administration, which sacrificed education to the needs of the army, would make the Prussian army that supreme trump card. The higher leading must continue to be Prussia's secret alike in the field and in the chanceries of Europe.

The needs of Prussia.

Prussia's geographical and political position imposed two further postulates, enforced by bitter experience. East Prussia was isolated; at the mercy of Russia, and Russia was an expanding state. Zorndorf and Kunersdorf were never forgotten by Frederick. Russia, before 1763, had numbers and a libertine Tzarina, Elizabeth, whose political intelligence was on a level with her morals; she still had the numbers, a new Tzarina no less a libertine, but as cool and heartless a devotee in the Temple of Enlightened Reason as Frederick himself. Frederick feared Russia, and fear was in Frederick's political thought the most reasonable basis of political affection. Secondly, Prussia could not stand alone. She must have allies. Great Britain was worse than untrustworthy and perfidious; she was useless. Frederick, therefore, struck Great Britain off the slate, and the alliance of the Seven Years War did not even linger on in a loose political connexion. The enmity of the House of Austria was obviously a permanent element to be reckoned with in all Germanic and European problems, while the Franco-Austrian alliance continued after the war. But if France and the House of Austria had definitely rejected all idea of reducing or partitioning Prussia, they might in combination

upset the balance of power to the disadvantage of Prussia, and recover elsewhere than in the north of Germany what the war had failed to give them. In 1765 the Archduke Joseph became emperor, and was associated with his mother in the government of the hereditary possessions of the House of Austria. Joseph, Frederick said, always took the second step before he took the first, a brilliant but not entirely accurate description of the most gifted Habsburg since Charles V.

Joseph II and Maria Theresia.

Joseph was wholly saturated with the creed of enlightened absolutism and of crowned philanthropy in the service of humanity organized under a beneficent despot. His ambition was to create a real Austria out of the complexus of Habsburg dominions, to make it geographically compact and to increase its strength by judicious annexations and a centralized administration based on reason of state and emancipated intelligence. His model was the Prussian king, and Frederick repaid the compliment by hanging Joseph's portrait in his bedroom, in case, which was not in the least likely, he should forget the restless ambition which fought at Vienna an unequal contest with a son's devotion to a noble and unemancipated mother and a ruler's passion to reform Austria and achieve Habsburg supremacy in one short lifetime. Frederick, who would have no woman in his establishment, neither queen, mistress, nor housekeeper, spent much of his life in combating able or powerful women—Maria Theresia, Madame de Pompadour, the Tzarinas Elizabeth and Catherine—and after 1763 found in his great antagonist the empress-queen at Vienna his best ally, though neither he nor she perhaps was aware of it. For Maria Theresia

was a more effective check on Joseph II's inexhaustible aspirations and ruthless rationalism than Frederick himself. To the end she refused to make human reason do the work both of a brain and a conscience, and neither defeat nor a tangible material success could extirpate her conviction that ethical right had a place in the divine scheme of things. The famous criticism of Frederick on Maria Theresia's part in the First Partition of Poland, 'Elle pleurait et prenait toujours,' in truth reflects with more severity on the king who made it than on the queen against whom it was levelled. Every argument, therefore, pointed in Frederick's eyes to the desirability of Russia as an ally; a Russo-Prussian alliance would make for peace, be a solid counter-system to the Bourbon-Habsburg combination and drive a wedge between Vienna and Petrograd. Frederick, like Bismarck, was haunted by the nightmare of coalitions, and with more reason. He had learned what a coalition could cost Prussia.

The Russian alliance, 1764–80.

The material for a Russo-Prussian alliance lay to his hand in Poland. West Prussia, with its ports of Elbing and Danzig, the sweep of the Vistula, and the fortress of Thorn, cut Prussia in half. Necessity required that it should cease to be Polish: necessity also gave to the duty of 'sewing together the dominions of the Hohenzollerns' the most flawless of political title deeds. Poland, cursed with an elective monarchy and an anarchic, corruptible, and tyrannical nobility, was a Naboth's vineyard to the three enlightened monarchs of Prussia, Russia, and Austria. In 1763 the Polish throne was vacant. Frederick supported the Russian candidate, Stanislaus Poniatowski, a discarded lover of the Tzarina Catherine

and thereby deprived a German rival, Elector of Saxony, from continuing the Polish Crown in the line that had held it since 1697. Stanislaus became king, or rather the crowned agent of Russian designs, and Frederick in 1764 secured the alliance of Russia, which was extended in 1767, but on dangerous terms; for, if Russia guaranteed him her support in case of an Austrian attack he was pledged to attack Austria if she attacked Russia. It was, again to quote Bismarck, a case in which Catherine controlled the longer arm of the lever, and her war with Turkey stirred the deepest resentment and whetted the land hunger of Vienna. In four years Frederick extricated himself triumphantly from a critical situation by diplomatic strategy and tactics comparable to his most masterly military manœuvres. The detailed strokes and counter-strokes would fill a volume. It must suffice here to point out that the solution was found in the famous-infamous First Partition of Poland.

The First Partition of Poland, 1772.

The idea of Partition was not new. It had been discussed as early as 1656 by Charles X of Sweden and the Great Elector: and for a century the idea haunted the chanceries, emerging in the sinister half-shadows of memoranda and projects, only to be dismissed to a troubled rest. Whether Frederick was the first author of a definite scheme is disputable and irrelevant to the main development. The danger of an Austro-Russian war, in which Prussia would fight Russia's cause with dubious prospects, the certainty that Catherine meant to absorb Turkish territory, and that Joseph II and Kaunitz were determined to have 'compensation', to break up the Russo-Prussian alliance if they could, and substitute a Russo-

Austrian understanding in its place, sharpened every faculty of Frederick's, and in the great game he had the cooler head, the more experienced hand, and a definite and limited object—the acquisition of West Prussia. He held tight to his alliance with Catherine, and when Joseph in 1770 seized the county of Zips, he flung his troops into Elbing. On January 28, 1772, the secret treaty with Russia riveted Catherine and Frederick in an agreement to partition, and there was nothing for Joseph to do but to fight Prussia and Russia, or join the agreement on the best terms he could make. War, as Frederick had foreseen, was unnecessary if the three enlightened masters of the east could aggrandize themselves at the expense of a defenceless neighbour. By the treaty of February 19, 1772, Austria joined in, and after five months spent in settling details the Partition was an accomplished fact. Joseph acquired Galicia and Lodomeria, Catherine a large strip of Lithuania, and Frederick West Prussia, with Pomerellen and Ermeland, but without Danzig or Thorn. On September 13 the proclamation of annexation was made, and the king could call himself correctly king *of*, and not merely as before, king *in* Prussia.

The argument for the Partition.

Frederick's action has been defended, firstly, because Poland was a dying kingdom, which the surgery of partition restored to a new life in the march of Prussian civilization and progress; secondly, because he had at length recovered the whole territory ruled by the Teutonic Order, and only took back what had been once germanized by German blood and sweat; thirdly, because he reorganized his acquisition and with marvellous

labour conferred on it the blessings of an enlightened autocracy and an efficient administration; fourthly because if he had not forestalled Catherine and Joseph they would have made the Partition, and he would have obtained nothing; fifthly, because the geographical, political, and military needs of Prussia required that the gap between East Prussia and Prussian Pomerania should be filled in; and, lastly, because without the annexation Prussia never could have played the part in German and European history that she has subsequently played to the indisputable benefit of Germany, Europe, and herself. These arguments are simply embroidered variants of the central doctrine that ends justify means and that reason of state and the law of dynastic needs, backed by bayonets, are superior to all other considerations. They would apply to and justify any and every aggressive conquest. Frederick paved the way to robbery by an iniquitous agreement with Catherine that Poland should remain decadent, anarchic, and unreformed. His diplomacy was throughout a tissue of fraud and deceit, and the consummation of his designs was only effected by sheer force on an unwilling victim. The Partition was, and remains, a crime; it provided an odious precedent for the subsequent extinction of the Polish kingdom and of Polish nationality in blood and flame, which it made inevitable; and it taught a world on the eve of revolution that *rois éclairés* differed from the footpad only in the magnitude of their greed, the scale of their operations, and the philosophical hypocrisy with which they sought to cover naked aggression.

West Prussia

Silesia and West Prussia—the two most successful robberies of the eighteenth century—completed Frederick's

and the Prussian monarchy.

claims to be enshrined as a Prussian national hero. The material gain of 1772 was as important as the strategical, and in a few years West Prussia, reorganized by Frederick with marvellous energy, contributed two million thalers to the royal revenue. The annexation linked up Silesia, the New March, and Pomerania with East Prussia, which was no longer a virtual hostage in Russia's hands. But it also made Polish politics a grave concern to the foreign office at Berlin. Catherine was determined that anarchy, an equivalent for Russian control, should continue at Warsaw, Lublin, and Cracow. Frederick dare not assist the Poles to reform their kingdom, nor resist the manipulation of Stanislaus by Russian pressure. For without the friendship of Russia he was isolated in the European world.

Frederick and Germany.

Peace and the maintenance of the *status quo* continued to define the objects of Frederick's policy from 1772 to his death—above all, the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Germanic federation. Frederick acquiesced in Russian or Austrian annexations at the expense of Turkey, for the very good reason that he could not prevent them; the integrity of Turkey was not worth the bones of a Pomeranian grenadier, and the friendship of Catherine was worth three army corps. To keep Joseph and Catherine apart—at least, to prevent their combination against himself—was the core of his political system. It was in Germany, not on the Danube or the Dniester, that Joseph was a perpetual menace to Prussia. And the emperor saw in the Bavarian Succession question the opportunity for a great stroke—the first step to a still greater stroke. In 1777 the Elector of Bavaria died

childless; the heir was the Elector Palatine, who was also ruler of Jülich and Berg. Joseph had not studied Prussian policy and the Silesian business without learning much. He set forth a historical and legal claim to a large part of Bavaria, and coerced or cajoled the heir, the Elector Palatine, into agreement while he pushed his troops across the frontier. Such an acquisition would aggrandize the House of Austria, increase imperial and Habsburg power, and give Prussia no equivalent compensation. Frederick promptly replied by denouncing this violation of public law, unprovoked aggression on the peace of the empire, and destruction of dynastic and princely rights. And as the Elector Palatine was also childless he secured the next heir, the Duke of Zweibrücken, whose reversionary claims in the name of justice he was prepared to defend. The robber of Silesia, who had plunged the empire into war in 1740, and the author of the Partition of 1772, protesting against the Partition of Bavaria—enlightened reason rebuking enlightened reason with the figments of an exploded conventional morality—is a dramatic spectacle. For, as Frederick coolly informed his brother, Prussian interest alone was his motive, *only it was most important not to say so*. When the interests of the German princes coincided with those of Prussia then efficiency required that those arguments, worthless in themselves, should be employed which would influence minds deaf to the voice of the higher political philosophy.

The War of the Bavarian Succession, 1778.

It came to war—the War of the Bavarian Succession—for Frederick was determined to checkmate Habsburg ambition (July 3, 1778). The campaign of 1778 and

1779 ended in a deadlock. While the king held up the main Austrian army in north-eastern Bohemia, his brother pushed along the Elbe, but failed to make a junction with Frederick's troops. The Austrians refused to risk a decision, which Frederick was unwilling to force on them. The stone-wall tactics of the enemy, rain, and difficulties of supply compelled the tired and ageing king to retreat. Before the spring permitted the projected invasion of Moravia, diplomacy had done its work, and the Peace of Teschen (May 13, 1779) restored peace. Bavaria was to pass to the Elector Palatine; the claims of the Elector of Saxony were liquidated in cash; Joseph acquired the Inn Quarter, a strip to the east of the river Inn, and France and Russia were made partners to the settlement which solemnly confirmed the treaties of Westphalia and the princely rights therein defined.

The Peace of Teschen, 1779.

The world was not surprised at the terms, but much surprised at the military ineffectiveness of Prussia. The army was disappointed with the king, and the king was bitterly disappointed with the army, with his generals, with the lack of discipline, and the absence of the qualities which had given Prussian troops the reputation of invincibility. The plain truth is that Frederick was not in 1778 the Frederick of 1756; he was not equal to the effort of taking a great risk, failure in which would have brought every enemy into the field against him—and Europe was a magazine of resentment, fear, and jealousy of Prussia—he was nursing his reputation, and he discovered that his army was not one on which he could implicitly rely for a supreme and difficult decision. The Prussian army, indeed, had begun to exhibit the defects

which the wars of the Revolution brought into the glaring light of day. The brain that had made it, and been its soul and mind, was wearing out, and there was no brain to take its place. It had not learned that another brain was necessary, nor was it allowed to have one. Frederick also probably felt that diplomacy, not arms, could win. France, in the throes of war with England, was in no position to aid her ally Joseph II; Maria Theresia exerted all her influence for a peaceful solution; a great war to complete the robbery of a neighbour was a sore burden on the conscience of a woman at whose door death was tapping; and Russia supported Prussia. Frederick secured the rights of the German princes at the price of registering the right of Russia and of France to determine what was desirable for Germany. But that did not trouble him. He had frustrated Joseph II, and, more important, made good the interest of Prussia.

Europe from 1779–86.

Six years of life remained, and Frederick spent them in a continuous effort to maintain the *status quo*. It was an up-hill task, but his energy and resource never flagged. 'The cursed' Joseph's fertility in devising 'detestable plans' necessitated the maximum of skill and vigilance. The expansion of Russia at the expense of Turkey, the unlimited possibilities that a partition of the Ottoman empire opened up, the union of Russian imperialism, which aimed at Constantinople, with the Habsburg tradition of advance down the Danube, wrested Russia from the Prussian alliance and made Catherine and Joseph partners and allies (1781). The world Frederick had known was dissolving—a France that had lost Voltaire

and was dominated by the gospel of Rousseau, reinforced from America, that was steadily sapping the foundations of the *ancien régime*; Great Britain defeated, and her empire dismembered by the birth of the United States; Poland the washpot of Catherine; Turkey apparently destined to share Poland's fate. To pacify Catherine, and to indulge the resentment he had never ceased to feel for Great Britain's 'treachery', in 1781 Frederick joined the Armed Neutrality of the north—a protest of the neutral states against British 'tyranny' at sea over neutral shipping; but the one area where Joseph's activities could be checked was in Germany and through the Germanic system. Habsburg princes had secured the rich and powerful sees of Cologne (an electorate) and Münster. To prevent the capture and exploitation of the Imperial Diet by the emperor—to frustrate a league against Prussia by the formation of a league against the Habsburg House, allied with France and Russia, was Frederick's final project and achievement.

The League of Princes, 1785.

The Peace of Teschen may be said to have suggested the idea, the principles, and the compelling inspiration. Joseph II was in Frederick's eyes a grave public danger; he threatened to make imperial power in reality what it was in theory. The Germanic system had come virtually to rest on a dualism—Prussia and the Hohenzollerns in the north, the House of Austria in the south. Any serious alteration in this equilibrium would be fatal to Prussia's interests and position. It remained for Prussia to convince the German princes that their interests and rights coincided with those of Prussia, and to resist all change to the detriment of the *status quo*. All the

resources of diplomacy were utilized to influence the German courts, amongst which the idea of union was already under discussion. And with the help of Hanover and Saxony the basis of a league was laid (July 23, 1785), while Frederick, with a skill that showed the old hand had not lost its cunning, was quite willing that the President should be the Elector of Hanover, the King of Great Britain. The Archbishop and Elector of Mainz acceded to the union, which gave the four electors a majority in the college that elected the emperor. But already Joseph's proposal that the Elector Palatine should exchange Bavaria for the Austrian Netherlands had been defeated (February 1785) by the vigorous opposition of Prussia to the violation of the Treaty of Teschen, and, unsupported by his allies France and Russia, the emperor abandoned the scheme. Fresh accessions to the League of the Four Electors flowed in, and the League became the Fürstenbund, or League of Princes—an organization, irrespective of status or creed, to maintain the empire as it existed, to guarantee the possessions and rights of every member, to oppose exchanges or secularization of territory, and to utilize its authority at the next election to secure recognition of its principles from the imperial head of Germany. The League of Princes has a deep interest, not merely as the last achievement of Frederick, or as a movement in which the young Freiherr vom Stein, destined for an imperishable place alike in Prussian and German history, made his entrance into German politics, but as showing the recognition by the German princes that German affairs were primarily and ultimately a matter for Germans to decide. But the

League accomplished little or nothing beyond coming into existence. Whether it would have opened a new chapter in German history had Frederick's brain, experience, and driving power been its mainspring it is impossible to say. How Frederick would have shaped Prussian policy and how moulded German action in the decade from 1786 to 1796—in the tide of the revolutionary maelstrom whose waters were already beginning to run deep and strong in France—we must always regret that we can never know. On August 17, 1786, working to the end, he died, quite unconscious that his death marked the closing of an epoch, and that French genius, which had inspired the illumination of the eighteenth century, was about to dominate the world anew. France and the French mind, not Joseph II and an enlightened absolutist imperialism, were the most formidable foe that the Prussia of Frederick was shortly called upon to face.

Frederick, the man and the king.

Frederick's reign and achievements are the most instructive expositions of his principles, methods, and work. A catalogue of limitations is always the easiest of easy tasks for a generation which is removed by a century or more from an impressive figure, and has never lived under the conditions of thought, of political and social organization, never felt the indefinable impact of a personality dominating the atmosphere of a vanished age. For as Bagehot so truly says, the difficulty in historical appreciation is not in seeing the merits and demerits of the solution of a problem, but in grasping the problem of which it was a solution. And in Frederick's case the limitations in his character, his principles, and his acts are obvious. His success, too, and what he made

of Prussia, seem stamped with inevitability. We are surprised that, having done so much, he did not accomplish more. Unconsciously we read back into the Prussia of 1740 the Prussia, not of Frederick William II, nor of Jena, but the Prussia of the War of Liberation, of the Zollverein, of Bismarck, Moltke, William I, and the University of Berlin, and we attribute to it resources that it never possessed, not even when Frederick died. Frederick, we are probably all agreed, is not a character that wins love; we can share Carlyle's feeling at the end of his great task that, unlike Cromwell, the closer he is studied the less he commands the homage due to an unanalysable moral grandeur and the daily communion of the invisible spirit with an invisible spiritual universe. Pathos and the tears of human things lie in Frederick's iron creed and loveless loneliness, even in that slavery to duty which brought a richer reward to the kingdom of Prussia than to the kingdom of Frederick's mind. For the greatest work that the truly great achieve is not what they make of their world but what they make of themselves. Frederick's limitations, too, were not wholly but to a large extent limitations also of his age. In the conduct of states and the diplomacy of international relations violence, fraud, deceit, ambition, lust of power, disregard of the moral rules that would bring a private individual to the prison or a gallows, were not invented by Frederick nor did they disappear with him. The most serious gravamen of the indictment here is that Frederick, who claimed to represent a new type of monarchy, taught the Europe of his day that success in these methods obliterated the moral taint, and incited

Danzig and Thorn did not become Prussian until 1793

both by precept and example the ruler who would be the first servant of his state to concentrate his brain power on a science of statecraft in which intellectual efficiency was everything and morality a damaging handicap. The doctrine that ends justify means is inevitably dogged and damned by a doctrine of casuistry, as elastic as it is pernicious. And in the politics of the eighteenth century Frederick is the arch-casuist. The circumstances of Prussia's position—it is the pith and marrow of his philosophy of politics—differentiated her from other states and transformed what would have been immoral acts in other rulers into a crown of glory for Prussia. The eighteenth century was mesmerized into admiring precisely the qualities in Frederick that are most vulnerable to the criticism of a century not in his debt, while it acquiesced in the defects that are most patent to us. But it also felt what we, born and bred in an age that has witnessed the triumph of the nationalist principle, of constitutional monarchy, representative institutions, and equality under the law, underrate or forget—the revelation of enlightened absolutism proclaimed by a living example and a gifted personality. The world before Frederick's reign knew of absolutists who were not enlightened, of victorious soldiers, strong administrators, and successful conquerors. But it saw in Frederick much more than a scientific commander, a master of all the technique of diplomacy, an autocratic director of a centralized and efficient bureaucracy. Frederick indeed taught rulers and ruled potent lessons—that the rights of a sovereign are a deduction from his duties ; that the title-deeds of monarchy in a rational world must rest on reason, and that the service

of the first servant of the state demands that the ruler should be the most efficient member of his kingdom. Frederick freed a hypnotized Europe from the fetishes and superstitions of Versailles. And if we deplore his interpretation of humanity and his failure to understand the capabilities and duties of womanhood in civilization, he could answer with truth that not one thaler wrung from obedient subjects was spent on himself, that he earned by the sweat and travail of forty-six years the modest wages he assigned to the King of Prussia, and that vicious women, a functionless aristocracy, a parasitic feudalism, and a corrupt and persecuting church had no place in his conception of a state. Blots there were in plenty in Frederick's Prussia, but it was free from the indelible infamies that stained the France of Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Diderot. And the best minds of that France, not blind to Frederick's shortcomings, hailed in the adamantine King of Prussia the morning star of a new day for civilization and the human spirit.

In the evolution of Prussia Frederick holds the place that his statue commands in the centre of his capital. The army, the bureaucracy, the monarchy—out of the union of these three he made the core of Prussian thought and action and the *rocher de bronze* of the Prussian State. Later generations took to pieces the Frederician machinery and recast the Frederician organization of society; little of what he left in 1786 seemed to be in existence a hundred years after his death. But in the making of the Prussian nation, which was the greatest and most difficult of the tasks that he bequeathed to his successors, the builders were consciously dominated by

Frederick's ideas and conceptions both of means and ends. And into the Prussian nation they regrafted the army, the sovereign, and the bureaucracy as Frederick would have made them. For these builders, as for Frederick, the sovereign and creative principle was the power and interest of Prussia, superior to and independent of every consideration. The service of Prussia was the sum of citizenship ; and to that service all other goods or ideals, whatever their intrinsic value, must be sacrificed, no matter what the cost to the individual might be. Between this conception and the British conception of the State reconciliation is impossible, for the two have their origin, derive their authority, and clinch their conclusions in fundamentally opposed interpretations of life.

[The literature on Frederick, particularly in German, is enormous. Apart from Carlyle's work, a contribution to great literature as well as to knowledge, the best and most scientific biography is that by R. KOSER (the second and revised edition of which has not been quite completed). Koser's standard work contains full and critical notes on the whole literature of Frederick's reign. For English readers the best short biography is that by W. F. REDDAWAY: *Frederick the Great and the Rise of Prussia.* Frederick's generalship can be studied in T. VON BERNHARDI: *Friedrich der Grosse als Feldherr* (also translated into English). For the thought of the eighteenth century consult: F. ROCQUAIN: *L'Esprit révolutionnaire avant la Révolution, 1715–89*: and É. FAGUET: *La Politique comparée de Montesquieu, Voltaire et Rousseau.* For those who would see Frederick at first hand the volumes of the great undertaking—*Die politische Correspondenz Friedrichs des Grossen*—thirty-six of which have been published, are indispensable.]

CHAPTER V

PRUSSIA AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

The Reign of Frederick William II (1786–97)

Frederick William II, 1786–97.

The death of Frederick II signified for Prussia something more than the passing of a great soldier. It meant the snapping of the mainspring of the administrative machine. This is the nemesis that waits upon an over-centralized autocracy. No security can be devised for a due succession of efficient administrators. Count Herzberg did his best to maintain the traditions of his master, but the personality of a minister, unless he attain to the stature of a Stein or a Bismarck, is of secondary significance in the Prussian economy. That of the sovereign is all-important. On the death of 'old Fritz' the crown descended to the eldest son of his younger brother, Augustus William. Frederick William II, though not devoid of ability, cannot be counted among the great men of the Hohenzollern line. A man of fine presence and genial manners, but unmethodical in business; easy-going, good-natured, and irresolute in character; highly emotional in temperament, voluptuous and self-indulgent; deeply influenced by the mysticism which has attracted several members of his house; devoted to music; interested in architecture and painting, but infirm of purpose and vacillating in

the conduct of affairs,—Frederick William presents to the psychologist an interesting study. But he was not the man to sustain the labours or to develop the policy of his great predecessor.

His reign, therefore, marks the beginning of a period of decadence and reaction for the Prussian state. But it is by no means devoid of significance.

Importance of his reign,

The alliance, concluded by Frederick William, with the maritime powers exercised a marked influence upon the politics alike of western, eastern, and northern Europe; in Poland he completed the work begun by Frederick the Great; in conjunction with Austria he plunged into war with revolutionary France, and, three years later, he negotiated with the French Republic a treaty which, though discreditable to Prussian policy and involving palpable treachery to the Empire, was, in some respects, undeniably advantageous to the position of the Hohenzollern in Germany.

The Triple Alliance.

From the moment of his accession Frederick William found himself involved in the diplomatic maelstrom which preceded the outbreak of the revolutionary wars. On all sides, east, west, and north, there was profound upheaval and unrest. Much of this was due to the tactlessness, the ambition, and the reforming zeal of the luckless Emperor Joseph II. Consumed with the desire to set everything to rights in a minimum of time, to introduce uniformity into his heterogeneous dominions, and to round off his territories, Joseph found himself in conflict, as we have seen, not only with the princes of the Empire, but with his own immediate subjects in Hungary and the Austrian Netherlands (Belgium). In the latter,

the situation was complicated by the fact that, while the radical reforms of Joseph had evoked the hostility of the privileged orders, there was an ultra-democratic party which looked for sympathy and support to France. In the United Provinces, also, there had long been a party which maintained close relations with France, in opposition to the party which for centuries had rallied round the House of Orange.

English policy.

Neither in Belgium nor in the United Provinces could England regard with indifference the extension of French influence. On coming into power in 1783 Pitt had found his country exhausted, humiliated, and diplomatically isolated. Before the outbreak of the Great War (1793) he had re-established the finances and had done much to restore Great Britain to her legitimate place in the European economy. His policy during these years had a twofold object: to counteract the influence of the Gallophil party in the Austrian and Dutch Netherlands, and to restrain the ambitions of Russia in the Near East. The main instrument of his diplomacy was the Triple Alliance, concluded between England, the United Provinces, and Prussia in 1788.

Towards that alliance Frederick William was inclined alike by personal and political reasons. His sister, the Princess Wilhelmina, was the wife of the Dutch Stadtholder, William V. The position of the House of Orange had for some time past been gravely imperilled by the growth of the 'Patriot' or Gallophil party in the Dutch provinces, and more particularly in Holland. In June 1787 a gross indignity was offered to the Princess of Orange, and the latter, perhaps inspired by Sir James

Harris, the British ambassador at The Hague, appealed for the protection and assistance of her brother. The states of Holland appealed to France, and Pitt promised support to Prussia if France should interfere in the United Provinces. In September 1787 a Prussian force of 25,000 troops, under the command of the Duke of Brunswick, crossed the Dutch frontier, overcame without difficulty the resistance of the 'Patriots', and completely re-established the authority of the Stadtholder.

On April 15, 1788, a treaty between Prussia and the United Provinces was signed at Berlin, providing for a defensive alliance between the two countries and guaranteeing the hereditary Stadtholderate to the House of Orange. On the same day a counterpart of this treaty was signed at The Hague between the Provinces and Great Britain. The conclusion of a similar treaty (June) between England and Prussia consummated the alliance between the three Powers. Variously estimated both as regards expediency and motives the Triple Alliance did unquestionably achieve definite and important diplomatic results. It renewed friendly relations, interrupted since 1762, between the courts of London and Berlin; it rescued the Low Countries from the embraces of France, and perhaps paved the way for the establishment of the United Kingdom of 1814; it saved the independence of Sweden; and it dealt to the prestige of Louis XVI a blow so severe that Napoleon regarded it as an important contributory cause of the French Revolution.[1]

That revolution did not begin to exercise any appreci-

[1] J. H. Rose, ap. *American Historical Review*, January 1909.

able influence upon the international situation for at least two years after the meeting of the States-General. During the period immediately preceding the outbreak of the great war diplomatic interest centred not in western but in eastern Europe. It was, indeed, in those years that the 'Eastern Question', as modern diplomacy understands the phrase, first attracted the serious attention of Europe as a whole. Ever since 1768 Russia had been making very rapid headway against the Ottoman Turks. The Treaty of Kainardji (1774) gave Russia for the first time a firm grip upon the Black Sea, and an ill-defined right of interference between the sultan and his Christian subjects. In 1783 Catherine II took a further step by the annexation of the Crimea, and made no secret of her ambition to expel the Ottomans from Europe and to revive the Byzantine empire in favour of her grandson Constantine. Fascinated by the personality, and sympathetic towards the policy of the Tzarina, the Emperor Joseph II readily agreed to join in the enterprise. The Turk did not wait to be attacked, and in 1788 the two eastern empires were at war with the Porte.

Prussia and the 'Eastern Question'.

The crisis in eastern affairs was variously regarded in northern Europe. Pitt, alone among English statesmen, viewed the progress of Russia with alarm; Gustavus III of Sweden seized the opportunity of marching an army into Finland; while Frederick William saw in the preoccupation of Austria and Russia the chance of an advantageous deal in Poland. Prussia was to get Danzig and Thorn; Poland, as consolation for the loss of these fortresses, was to recover Galicia from Austria, while Austria was to get compensation from the Porte. For

the attainment of these objects the machinery of the Triple Alliance was to be utilized.

To this dangerous development Pitt was strongly opposed. When Denmark, at the bidding of Catherine, attacked Gustavus III, England willingly joined Prussia in bringing effective pressure to bear upon Denmark. Thanks to their intervention Swedish independence was saved, and the equilibrium in northern Europe was maintained. Nor did Pitt object to the acquisition of Danzig and Thorn by Prussia. On the contrary, he was prepared to facilitate it, by offering commercial concessions to Poland. But to Pitt the Triple Alliance was primarily valuable as an instrument for the preservation of peace. The ambitions of Frederick William, and in particular his intrigues at Warsaw and Constantinople, threatened to provoke a general European war. He insisted that the allies must have an adequate force in the neighbourhood of the Austrian Netherlands, on the one hand, to prevent the Belgians from throwing themselves into the arms of France; and on the other, to prevent the Emperor from subjugating his restless subjects by force of arms. If Joseph refused to surrender Galicia to Poland the allies must acknowledge the independence of the Netherlands.

About Galicia Pitt cared little: about Belgium he cared much, and he was equally opposed to its immediate absorption by France or to the declaration of a precarious independence.

So matters stood when Joseph II died (February 20, 1790) and was succeeded in the Habsburg dominions by his brother, Leopold II. The accession of this wise

and cautious prince probably averted a European war. Deeply incensed by what he regarded, not unjustly, as the perfidious conduct of the Prussian monarch, who had been simultaneously negotiating with Austria at the proposed expense of Turkey, and with Turkey against Austria, Leopold appealed to Prussia's ally, Great Britain. He emphasized his intention to make concessions to Belgium and to make peace with the sultan, but he declared that if attacked by Prussia he would hand over Belgium to France. England and Holland, thereupon, definitely refused to countenance or support the policy of Prussia, and in July Prussia came to terms with Austria in the Convention of Reichenbach. Those terms were, on the whole, all to the advantage of Austria. The ancient privileges of the Austrian Netherlands were guaranteed; Prussia gave up, for the time, the hope of acquiring Danzig and Thorn; Austria agreed to make peace with Turkey on the basis of the *status quo*. In August, almost simultaneously, Gustavus III concluded with Russia the Treaty of Warela; a year later (August 1791) Leopold signed the Treaty of Sistova with the Turks, and in January 1792 Russia dictated to the sultan the Treaty of Jassy. The latter treaty stipulated that the important fortress of Oczakow and the surrounding territory up to the Dniester should be ceded to Russia.

Thus was tranquillity at last restored in Europe. To this end the pacific efforts of Pitt had largely contributed. But Frederick William claimed, and not without reason, that Prussia also had made considerable sacrifices for the sake of the European equilibrium. He was inclined, indeed, to think that the sacrifices demanded of him by

his pacific maritime allies had been disproportionate. Consequently he was the more disposed to enter into closer relations with Vienna. That those relations involved Europe, before many months had passed, in a new and terrible war was not primarily the fault either of Frederick William or of the Emperor Leopold.

The French Revolution

Until 1791 the revolutionary movement in France was regarded almost exclusively as a matter of domestic interest. The abolition of feudalism in France by the frenzied decrees of August 4, raised, it is true, difficult questions as to the rights of the German princes who held land in Alsace, rights which had been expressly reserved at the cession of Alsace in 1648. The rising flood of aristocratic emigration from France to Germany and the appeals of the *émigrés* to the German Powers threatened still further difficulties. The publication of Burke's *Reflections* (November 1790) compelled all thinking men to face the question whether any established government was secure 'as long as this strange, nameless, wild, enthusiastic thing is established in the centre of Europe'. In Mainz there was a strong republican party; most of the German districts west of the Rhine were Gallic in sympathies; while Baden, the Palatinate, and Würtemberg were by no means unaffected by French ideas. The French Queen Marie Antoinette was the sister of the Emperor Leopold. Frederick William of Prussia inherited the strong monarchical instincts of his House and was deeply shocked by the insults offered to the whole principle of monarchy by the revolutionary party in France. The doctrines proclaimed in France, if valid at all, were of universal and not merely local

validity, and there was a growing party in France anxious to make them prevail, not in France only, by force of arms. No one could fail to realize that all these were dangerous factors in the international situation, and that from any one of them a spark might fly on to inflammable material. Nevertheless, down to the summer of 1791, no contemporary observer could have plausibly predicted the probability of a great European conflict, and Pitt's firm belief in the maintenance of peace remained, as is well known, unshaken until the spring of 1792.[1]

The Declaration of Pillnitz.

What, then, were the causes which precipitated war between France and the German Powers? For some time past the Count of Artois and the emigrant nobles had been making passionate appeals to the European sovereigns for intervention on behalf of monarchy and aristocracy. Those appeals were not publicly countenanced by the French court, but that the king, and still more the queen, supported them privately there can be little doubt. The Emperor Leopold had grave misgivings as to the expediency of intervention, and did his best to dissuade his relations from that flight to the frontier which was interrupted so disastrously at Varennes. But though his advice was disregarded he offered them an asylum, and their ignominious recapture stirred him to more energetic action on their behalf. In May the Emperor had met the Count of Artois at Mantua, and on July 6 he issued to his brother monarchs the 'Padua' circular, inviting them to join him 'in vindicating the honour and liberty of Louis XVI and his family, and in

[1] Pitt's optimism was shared by the Prussian and Austrian ambassadors in Paris: see Denis, *L'Allemagne*, i. 112.

putting limits upon the perilous extremes to which the Revolution was tending in France'. A month later the Emperor conferred with the Prussian king at Pillnitz. The two monarchs refused to allow the *émigrés* to use their asylum in Germany for warlike preparations against France; and they rejected their demand for immediate intervention. But these wise measures were accompanied by a concession to the *émigrés*, as foolish as it was futile. The famous manifesto known as the Declaration of Pillnitz declared that the position of the French monarch was a matter of concern to all European sovereigns; it demanded that the German princes who had been deprived of feudal rights in Alsace should be reinstated, and it threatened war if the demands were not conceded.

The sentiments expressed in the Declaration of Pillnitz were those of Frederick William rather than of Leopold. The Emperor, indeed, insisted that before acting they must have the concurrence of the other Powers; and he was aware that that concurrence would not be forthcoming. He imagined, vainly enough, that a threat which he knew to be empty would overawe the revolutionary leaders in Paris. It had, as might have been foreseen, a precisely opposite effect. In Paris it was regarded as a menace to the independence of the French nation. 'If cabinets engage kings in a war against peoples, we will engage peoples in a war against kings.' Such was Isnard's retort to the Pillnitz manifesto, and Isnard spoke the mind of France.

The Emperor Leopold, however, still hoped and strove for peace. But the forces opposed to him were too strong. Gustavus III of Sweden was genuinely anxious

to initiate a monarchical crusade; Catherine II, with more sinister motive, was well content that other sovereigns should embark on it. 'I cudgel my brains to embroil the courts of Vienna and Berlin in the affairs of France that I may have elbow room'—in Poland. But the worst enemies to peace were in Paris. The Girondins were spoiling for a war, by which they hoped to consolidate a republic. The royalists looked to war as the sole chance of saving the monarchy. On March 1 the Emperor Leopold died, and in the same month a Girondin ministry was installed in office. On April 20 France declared war upon 'the King of Hungary and Bohemia'. Frederick William of Prussia, faithful to the offensive and defensive treaty concluded with Austria in February, resolved immediately to throw in his lot with his ally.

The War of the First Coalition.

The command of the Prussian army was entrusted to the Duke of Brunswick, but mobilization was slow, and not until July were the Prussians ready to take the field. The plan of campaign was that Brunswick, at the head of 42,000 Prussians, should advance from Coblentz into Champagne, being supported by the Austrians on his right and left flanks. On July 27, just before the allied army crossed the Rhine, a manifesto, drafted by the *émigrés*, was issued in Brunswick's name to the French people. He bade them submit to the authority of their lawful sovereign, and declared that for any resistance offered to the allied armies they would be held collectively and individually responsible. Should any harm befall Louis XVI or his family the French capital would be razed to the ground. To this insolent manifesto Paris responded by the insurrection of the tenth of August.

The king was suspended, and sent as a prisoner to the Temple; a convention was summoned, and on September 21 the republic was proclaimed.

Meanwhile the Prussians, having crossed the Rhine (August 19), took Longwy and Verdun (August 30). The one chance of success lay in a bold and rapid advance on Paris; but Brunswick, though a good strategist of the orthodox school, was slow-moving and over-cautious. His army, moreover, was ill equipped. The supply services were shamefully inadequate, the medical service was bad, the commissariat was scanty, and the lack of efficiency among the officers was not redeemed by enthusiasm in the ranks. At Valmy the Prussians suffered a decided check; the advance on Paris was arrested. On November 6 the French won a brilliant victory over the Austrians on the Belgian frontier at Jemappes; Mons, Brussels, Liège, Namur, and Antwerp surrendered in turn; everywhere the French armies were welcomed by the Belgian populace as friends, and long before Christmas the Austrian Netherlands were in the hands of the French Republic.

Custine's success on the middle Rhine was not less decisive than that of Dumouriez in Belgium. Speier, Worms, and Mainz opened their gates to him; but Frankfort, though taken by the French in October, was brilliantly retaken by the Prussians in December.

The recapture of Frankfort was the only consolation obtained by the allies in their initial campaign, and the close of the year saw the French in triumphant occupation not only of Belgium but of Savoy and Nice. Meanwhile, drunk with the blood of the September massacres,

and elated by their unexpected success in the field, the French Republicans committed a series of blunders. With a shameless disregard for international obligations they declared the navigation of the Scheldt open, and then proceeded by a needlessly provocative decree to call upon all peoples, whether well or ill governed, to rise against their rulers and declare their freedom. On January 21 Louis XVI was sent to the guillotine, and on February 1 the French Republic declared war upon England and Holland. The Coalition thus embraced not Austria and Prussia only, but England, Holland, Spain, Portugal, Sardinia, and several of the German princes. But there was no real cohesion among the allies. Still, for the greater part of 1793, success rewarded their efforts in the field. The Austrians reconquered Belgium (March), entered France, and threatened Paris. On the middle Rhine the Prussians retook Mainz (July 28), marched triumphantly into Alsace, and in the autumn (September–November) they won a series of decisive though costly victories in the Palatinate. But these reverses to French arms only roused the French people to more vigorous exertions at home and in the field. In Paris the Jacobins asserted themselves over all their rivals; Carnot reorganized the army; and the whole nation responded superbly to the call of its leaders. In the summer of 1793 France was in danger, and in presence of that danger it was essential, therefore, to crush the supposed enemies of France at home, and to drive back the invader from her frontiers. Before the end of the year France was rapidly regaining the ground she had lost: the English were compelled to raise the siege of Dunkirk and in September were defeated at

Hondschoote; in October the Austrians were defeated at Wattignies; the allies were cleared out of Alsace and driven back across the Rhine, and before the close of the year the important arsenal of Toulon was retaken from the English. On every side the *levée en masse* had justified the energy and wisdom of Carnot.

Opposed to him was a coalition which was no better than a rope of sand. Suspected in 1793, this fact became manifest in 1794. In the early part of the year the Austrians won some successes in the Netherlands, but after a great battle at Fleurus (June 26) they gradually withdrew, the French reoccupied Brussels, and before the close of the year were again masters of Belgium. In May, Prussia had concluded a subsidy-treaty with England by which she pledged herself to maintain 60,000 men in the field. Too weak to fight her own battles on land, England hoped, by this means, to save the Netherlands from France. But Prussia, while pocketing English gold, continued to play her own game. In the fighting of 1794 she took little part, and that part was taken not upon the Belgian frontiers, as Pitt had intended, but on the upper Rhine. Möllendorf achieved some success in the Palatinate, but in October the Prussians recrossed the Rhine, and the French were left in occupation of almost all the territories to the west of the river.

Frederick William had, indeed, lost all interest in the western war. His monarchical instincts had been shocked by the doings of the revolutionaries in Paris; he had been much more eager than the Emperor to respond to the appeal of the *émigrés*, but from the first his eyes were fixed far more firmly on the Vistula than

on the Rhine. Among his counsellors there were several, such as Prince Henry, Count Haugwitz, General Möllendorf, and even the Duke of Brunswick, who preferred a French to an Austrian alliance, while to most Prussian soldiers the idea of the Prussian army playing the part of English mercenaries was not unnaturally distasteful.

The Treaty of Basel.

That Prussia therefore should have sought to negotiate a separate peace with the French Republic can have caused little surprise. Nor was France averse to peace with Prussia. To divide the two great German Powers had always been a prime object of her diplomacy; their joint invasion of French territory had now been triumphantly repelled; not a German soldier remained upon French soil; besides, the crusading enthusiasm in France was beginning to burn itself out; the Thermidorian party was steadily gaining ground, and the mass of the French people were anxious for a settlement at home and peace on the frontiers. Accordingly, in January 1795 a Prussian envoy, Count von der Goltz, was sent to Switzerland to negotiate with Barthélemy, the French ambassador. Goltz died before terms were arranged, but Count Hardenberg succeeded to his mission, and on April 5, 1795, the Treaty of Basel was concluded. Prussia gave France a free hand to the west of the Rhine, she ceded Mörs, Cleves, and upper Guelders, and recognized the Republic. France, in return, agreed to recognize the neutrality of the German princes north of the Main, including the Elector of Hanover, and to allow Prussia to compensate herself, of course at the expense of the Empire, on the right bank of the Rhine. Within the next eighteen months the example of Prussia was followed

by Hesse-Cassel, Würtemberg, Baden, the Suabian Circle, and Bavaria.

That Prussia purchased peace at the price of honour is undeniable. The Treaty of Basel betrayed a cynical disregard for the Empire, in which Prussia now held the second place; it involved a gross breach of faith with Austria, and it meant the betrayal of the smaller princes of the Empire, of whose rights Frederick II had constituted himself the champion. But was Prussia's conduct foolish as well as base? It is difficult to answer this question without mental reference to the subsequent humiliations of Jena and Tilsit. But viewed from a strictly contemporary standpoint, there was much to be said for an understanding with France. Austria, not France, was the secular rival of Prussia; if Prussia did not agree with her adversary quickly the chances were that her ally would. Nor was the possibility of a general peace remote. Napoleon's star had not yet risen above the horizon. France was inclined to peace, and Pitt would gladly have come to terms with the Directory. But the overwhelming motive which inspired Prussia's action in 1795, the *causa causans* of the Treaty of Basel, was anxiety as to the position in Poland, a desire to conserve what she had already acquired, and to get her share in the final scramble. To this topic we shall return. Before doing so the brief sequel of the war of the First Coalition may be told.

The Rhine campaign of 1795 left Austria in a favourable position, but in the following year she had to meet a threefold attack. The Archduke Charles effectually disposed of the armies of Jourdan and Moreau in the Palatinate and Bavaria respectively, but in North Italy

PRUSSIA
1795-1807
DENMARK
SWEDEN
BALTIC SEA
Königsberg
Tilsit
Heligoland
Kiel
Colberg
Danzig
HOLSTEIN
Lübeck
Hamburg
Bremen
MECKLENBURG
Stettin
POMERN
EAST PRUSSIA
WEST PRUSSIA
NEW EAST PRUSSIA
Thorn
Warsaw
HANOVER
1806
ALTMARK
KURMARK
Hanover
Berlin
Magdeburg
NEUMARK
SOUTH PRUSSIA
Münster
1803
1806
Leipzig
Halle
SAXONY
Breslau
SILESIA
GALICIA
Aachen
Cologne
Erfurt
Weimar
Dresden
Jena
HESSE
Coblenz
Frankfurt
Prague
Königgratz
Trèves
Mainz
BOHEMIA
MORAVIA
FRANCE
Speier
Austerlitz
Rastadt
Baden
Strassburg
BADEN
Ulm
BAVARIA
Munich
AUSTRIA
Wagram
HUNGARY
Vienna
Salzburg
Basel
SWITZERLAND
R. Rhine
R. Meuse
R. Danube
R. Main
R. Elbe
R. Oder
R. Vistula
Prussian Territory
H.S. Hattin
Oxford

Napoleon was in command. In a fortnight's campaign he brought the King of Sardinia to his knees, and a few weeks later he was master of all Lombardy, except Mantua. From June 1796 to February 1797 that great fortress resisted all his efforts, but on February 2 Mantua surrendered, and in April preliminaries of peace were arranged at Leoben. Negotiations dragged on for six months. During those months Napoleon picked a quarrel with the republic of Venice, deposed the ruling oligarchy, and occupied the city and its dependent islands in the Adriatic. In October the Treaty of Campo-Formio was concluded with the emperor.

The Treaty of Campo-Formio.

Belgium was definitely ceded to France, and the emperor agreed to cede Lombardy and to recognize, as a new French dependency, the Cisalpine Republic. But it was at the expense of a third party—the Venetian Republic—that the friendship of Napoleon and Austria was sealed. All continental Venice east of the Adige, with Istria and Dalmatia, was annexed to Austria; the Venetian territory west of the Adige was added to the Cisalpine Republic; Corfu and the Ionian Isles—'stepping-stones towards Egypt'—were annexed to France. So much was published to the world. More significant were the secret articles. Austria acquiesced in the annexation by France of all German territory west of the Rhine except that which had belonged to Prussia. This curious exception was clearly 'dictated by no love for the Court of Berlin, but solely that Prussia might be deprived of any claim to compensation'.[1] In return for these concessions made largely at the expense of the

[1] Fisher: *Napoleonic Statesmanship (Germany)*, p. 27.

Empire, the Emperor, as sovereign of Austria, was to acquire the Inn district of Bavaria, long coveted by the Habsburgs, and the great bishopric of Salzburg. The German princes and states dispossessed on the left bank of the Rhine were to receive compensations on the right, at the expense of the ecclesiastical principalities. Mainz was to go to France, and the Prince of Holland, deprived of his Stadtholderate in Holland, was to be compensated in Germany.

The Treaty of Campo-Formio was the counterpart and complement of the Treaty of Basel. Together they constituted a brilliant triumph for France and for Napoleon. The dream of ages had been realized. That for which Richelieu and Mazarin and Louis XIV had schemed and toiled was at last achieved. France was in possession of her 'natural frontiers'. Savoy and Nice, Belgium, and the western Rhinelands were all in her keeping.

But these treaties, if they marked the attainment of historic French ambitions, denote not less significantly the close of an epoch for Germany. The mediaeval empire, which in Voltaire's cynical phrase had long since ceased to be either Holy, or Roman, or an empire, was now palpably approaching the final catastrophe. The Habsburgs had long worn the imperial crown; the Hohenzollern had professed devotion, if not to the person of the emperor, at least to the institution he personified. It would, however, be difficult to say which of the two great German Powers revealed itself in these treaties more completely indifferent to the interests of Germany as a whole. Both were ready to surrender the western Rhinelands to France; both were willing to

accept compensation at the expense of their colleague-princes; both were intent upon rounding off their own hereditary possessions and consolidating their own dynastic position. The Holy Roman Empire was indeed ready for the 'mediatizing' intervention of the Corsican conqueror. But before we follow to its doom the empire of Charlemagne, we must see the end of the kingdom of Poland.

Prussia and Poland.

Poland supplies the key to the policy of Prussia during the revolutionary era. Previous chapters have disclosed the connexion between the Hohenzollern Electors of Brandenburg and the Prussian Duchies, and have traced the sequence of events leading to the first partition of Poland in 1772. Of that nefarious operation Frederick II was, as we have seen, the principal instigator. By it Poland lost one-third of its territory, but the great fortresses of Danzig and Thorn, eagerly desired by Frederick, remained under the suzerainty of Poland. Three years later (1775) the Poles accepted a revised constitution which, though making for more orderly and more economical administration, left Poland entirely dependent upon Russia. But when in 1788 Russia became involved in war both with Turkey and Sweden the anti-Russian party among the Poles, led by Adam Casimir Czartoryski and Ignatius Potocki, seized the opportunity of electing a Diet pledged to secure a liberal and independent constitution for their unhappy country.

The Diet, which met at Warsaw in October 1788, secured the withdrawal of Russian troops and entered into cordial relations with Frederick William II of Prussia. The latter readily concluded an offensive and defensive

alliance with the Poles, and offered to recover for them Austrian Galicia, provided they were willing to hand over Danzig and Thorn to him. Pitt, as we have seen, favoured the scheme and, distasteful as the conditions were, the Polish patriots would perhaps have done well to accept them. But while they procrastinated, Prussia and Austria came to terms at Reichenbach, and Poland had lost its chance. Nevertheless, the patriots made a desperate effort to put what remained of their house in order. In 1791 a new Constitution was adopted by a *coup de main*. The elective monarchy, the *liberum veto*, and the right of confederation were swept away; the executive was vested in a hereditary king assisted by a 'responsible' ministry; there was to be a bi-cameral legislature, including representatives of the cities; the caste system was abolished, and a large instalment of social reform was effected.

The new Constitution was an act of defiance to Catherine, who was pledged to maintain the anarchy enshrined in the Constitution of 1775. The other partitioners, however, looked more kindly upon it. To Austria a Poland, strengthened and renovated, would have been an indubitable advantage. Frederick William of Prussia, though disappointed of Danzig and Thorn, cordially congratulated the Poles on the Constitution of 1791, and when he met the Emperor Leopold at Pillnitz the two monarchs renewed a mutual guarantee of Polish integrity and independence (September 1791).

Second Partition of Poland.

They reckoned without the Tzarina Catherine. In 1792 the situation was again in several ways more favourable to Russia, not least by reason of the fact that the

German Powers were involved in war with France. Consequently a small group of pro-Russian Poles formed the Confederation of Targowica, denounced the new Constitution as a despotic *coup d'état*, demanded their ancient liberties, and appealed to Catherine for help. Only too willingly Catherine complied; a Russian force was sent into Poland, and before the end of June Poland was once more in the grip of Russia. The notable reforms devised in 1791 were swept away, the old anarchical constitution was restored, and Catherine, despite a strong protest from Austria, took toll from her Polish friends in the shape of some 98,000 square miles of territory and three million inhabitants. Prussia, admitted to a share of the spoil, got Danzig and Thorn with the provinces of Great Poland, Gnesen, Kalisch, and Posen, including in all about a million and a half of people and 22,000 square miles of territory. The partitioners promised to use their good offices to secure the Bavarian exchange for Austria, a concession which did little to mollify the emperor. Austria, however, was deeply engaged in the west, and her protests against the second partition could therefore be safely disregarded.

The Polish patriots did everything in their power to avert the dismemberment of their country, but they struggled in vain, and on September 23, 1793, the Diet at Grodno gave a silent assent to the cession of Posen, Danzig, and Thorn to Prussia, and at the same time revoked all the proceedings of 1791 and entered into a formal alliance with Russia.

As a crime against the principles of nationality and independence the partition of 1793 was even worse than that of 1772. The two really responsible partitioners,

Frederick of Prussia and Catherine of Russia, might in 1772 have plausibly argued that Poland had shown itself incapable of reform, that, as it then stood, it was a perpetual menace to the security of its neighbours and to the peace of Europe, and that Prussia and Russia were merely recovering lands which, in the past, Poland had stolen from them. As regards Russia's share this plea was not merely admitted but emphasized by Lord Salisbury.[1] It might also have been urged in favour of the greater part of West Prussia. But no similar pleas could avail to excuse the partition of 1793. The Poles had manifested not merely the desire but the ability to set their house in order. In the eyes of the partitioners the crime of the reformers of 1791 was that they did their work too well; that they might have given a new and vigorous life to Poland and thus have interposed a fatal and final barrier to the aggressions of her powerful neighbours.

Danzig presents a real difficulty to those who would deal justly both with Poland and with Prussia. The Vistula, it has been said, is Poland, and Danzig commands the mouth of it. On the other hand, Danzig was and is a German city. If to the Poles it is unthinkable that Prussia should permanently control their one great commercial outlet to the north; to the Prussians it is intolerable that the maritime capital of West Prussia should belong to any one but themselves. The unsatisfactory expedient of neutralization would seem in this case to be the only solution of an insoluble problem.

The great province of Posen is in a different category. The inhabitants were predominantly, and in the eastern

[1] *Essays on Foreign Politics*, pp. 11 seq.

marshes almost exclusively, Polish. On the other hand, it commands the communications between Königsberg and Breslau, and Bismarck regarded its possession as even more vital to the Prussian State than that of Alsace-Lorraine. 'Munich and Stuttgart are not more endangered', he said, 'by a hostile occupation of Strassburg and Alsace than Berlin would be by an enemy in the neighbourhood of the Oder. Therefore, it must be assumed that if ever the question comes to an issue, we shall be determined to sacrifice our last man and the last coin in our pocket to defend the eastern frontier of Germany as it has been for the last eighty years.'[1] Prussian policy in regard to Posen will be discussed later. We have yet to describe the last act in the eighteenth-century drama.

Finis Poloniae.

The Polish patriots did not acquiesce tamely in the second dismemberment. After it had been consummated in 1793 the Russians were virtually in military occupation of what still remained of 'independent' Poland. In March 1794, however, the Polish army rose under their former leader Tadensz Kosciusko. This intrepid hero had after the partition of 1793 undertaken a mission to Paris. He now returned to Poland, called upon his countrymen to throw off the yoke of Russia and Prussia, and expelled the Russian garrisons from Cracow, Warsaw, and Wilna. For some months Kosciusko was practically dictator of Poland. But his triumph was short lived. In May 1794 Frederick William placed himself at the head of a Prussian army and marched into Poland. In June the Prussians won a decisive victory at Rawka,

[1] Cf. *Round Table*, No. 17, p. 78.

occupied Cracow, and for two months (July 9–September 6) besieged Warsaw. Listening to the fatal advice of Bischoffwerder, Frederick William hesitated to attack Warsaw and so gave Russia her chance. Having reoccupied Wilna in August, the Russians inflicted a crushing defeat upon Kosciusko and on November 8 they re-entered Warsaw in triumph. Kosciusko himself was wounded and taken prisoner by the Russians. On the accession of the Tzar Paul (1796), who had a chivalrous admiration for the Polish patriot, Kosciusko was released and retired to Switzerland, where in 1817 he died.

His defeat was soon followed by the extinction of his country. In January 1795 Catherine II came to a secret arrangement with the Emperor, to which Prussia was to be subsequently invited to adhere. The Russian frontier was advanced up to the river Bug, an addition of territory which brought with it about 1,200,000 inhabitants: Austria got Cracow with the Palatinates of Sandomir and Lubelsk, with about one million people. Prussia was to have Warsaw with the district between the Oder, the Bug, and the Niemen, but only on condition that she acquiesced in further accession of territory both to Russia and Austria at the expense of Turkey. Frederick William was highly indignant, as well he might be, at the treatment accorded to him by Russia. The only parallel to Russia's treacherous conduct towards her Prussian partner in crime was to be found in Frederick William's own treatment of Austria in 1793. As things were he had no option but to acquiesce in the terms offered to him, and so in 1795 'New East Prussia' was added to his dominions with another million of Poles.

By the partition treaties of 1793 and 1795 the Hohenzollern dominions were nearly doubled in extent; but the access of political strength was very far from being commensurate with the increase in geographical area. The partitioners destroyed the Polish State: they did not and could not exterminate the Polish nation. That nation, which at the end of the eighteenth century numbered fourteen millions, now numbers twenty-four. Of these, three and a half millions are subjects of the King of Prussia. But Prussia has never assimilated them. Every effort either to conciliate or to coerce them—and both policies have at times been pursued—has resulted in more complete estrangement between the Prussian government and its Polish subjects. To outward seeming Frederick William had achieved a considerable success, but in no respect did he add to the essential greatness or even—apart from the acquisition of Danzig and Thorn—to the strategical security of his kingdom.

Death of Frederick William II, 1797.

Two years after the third partition of Poland Frederick William passed away. He was neither a great man nor a great ruler. He did something for the encouragement of trade, but in matters ecclesiastical and intellectual he was a blind obscurantist. Under the influence of the Rosicrucians and more particularly of Wöllner, their director, Frederick William insisted upon the narrowest evangelical orthodoxy; a rigid censorship was imposed upon the publication of books, and nothing was allowed to be taught by the Protestant pastors except what was set forth in the official manuals. Insistence upon religious orthodoxy did not prevent a decay of morals; still less could it avert a subtle degeneration in politics. In the

European economy Prussia, despite notable accessions of territory, no longer held the position to which she had been elevated by Frederick the Great. The reign of his successor, brief as it was, sufficed to dissipate much of the prestige and influence which Frederick had won for his adolescent kingdom. In the devious ways of diplomacy Frederick William was no match for Catherine II. To his army the campaigns against France (1792–5) brought no fresh laurels, while the Treaty of Basel, by which the war was brought to a conclusion, was a conspicuous illustration of personal bad faith and political pusillanimity. That treaty is regarded by Treitschke as not merely infamous but disastrous. Before Prussia could regain her place in Europe, before she could aspire to lead the German people in their struggle for national independence, she had herself to pass through the fiery furnace of defeat, humiliation, and dismemberment.

[For further reading: HAUSSER: *Deutsche Geschichte vom Tode Friedrichs des Grossen*; C. T. HEIGEL: *Deutsche Geschichte, 1786–1806*; FYFFE: *Modern Europe*; SOREL: *L'Europe et la Révolution française*; for Prussian policy in Poland cf. VON SYBEL: *French Revolution*; LORD EVERSLEY: *Partitions of Poland*; and for later developments PRINCE VON BÜLOW: *Imperial Germany*.]

CHAPTER VI

THE UNMAKING OF PRUSSIA, 1797–1807

JENA AND TILSIT

'WE have fallen asleep upon the laurels of Frederick the Great.' Such was the text given out by Queen Luise after Jena. All else is commentary. Frederick William III.

Over the decade which intervened between 1795 and 1805 the historian of Prussia may therefore pass lightly. Those years are among the most inglorious in the story of the Hohenzollern, though the occupant of the Prussian throne was one of the most amiable of his race. Frederick William III was twenty-seven years of age when he succeeded, in 1797, to his father's throne. High hopes were entertained of the new king. 'Pure reason has descended from heaven and taken its seat upon our throne.' So spake an enthusiastic subject, and the sentiment was widely entertained. As regards the king's capacity for affairs these hopes were destined to disappointment; as regards his personal attributes they were not. No more simple and unaffected gentleman; no man of more sincere piety and unblemished morals; no king with a more single-minded desire to serve his people ever sat upon the Prussian throne. But his head was inferior to his heart. Irresolute in will and contracted in outlook,

he had inherited the obstinacy without the ability of his ancestors.

His wife, whom he married in 1793, and to whom he was tenderly attached, was not ill fitted, had the custom of the House permitted it, to supply many of Frederick William's deficiencies. A daughter of Prince Charles of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Queen Luise was a woman of exceptional beauty and grace, and richly dowered with both character and intellect. The mother of two Prussian kings, she still holds a peculiar place in the affection and respect of all good Germans, not only as the queen who braved the storm of 1806–7, but as the mother of the first 'Kaiser in Deutschland'.[1] Not even Queen Luise, however, could overcome the combined hesitation and obstinacy of the king, nor counteract the timorous and unworthy counsels of such men as Prince Henry, the great-uncle of the monarch, and Count Haugwitz.

The Congress of Rastatt, November 1797—March 1799.

Before he had been a week on the throne Frederick William was called upon to confront a situation, heavily fraught with destiny alike for Prussia and for Germany. Of the terms concluded between the French Republic and the German Powers at Basel and Campo-Formio, the most important, as we have seen, were secret. Prussia and Austria agreed with their adversary over the prostrate and unconscious body of the German Reich—the Holy Roman Empire in Germany. The time came, however, when the agreements had to be fulfilled and general propositions to be worked out in detail.

For this purpose a Congress was summoned to meet at

[1] William I was born in 1797—the first year of his father's reign

Rastatt in Baden, in November 1797. With almost incredible hypocrisy the Emperor adjured the Congress 'to maintain the common interests of the Fatherland with noble conscientiousness and German steadfastness; and thus, united with their Imperial head, to promote a just and lasting peace, founded upon the integrity of the Empire and of its Constitution'. A glance at the secret articles of the Treaty of Campo-Formio (see p. 183) will furnish a sufficient commentary upon this amazing adjuration. That the German Fatherland was abominably betrayed by its leading states is beyond dispute; whether, as then constituted, it was worth preserving is less easy to determine. The intrinsic gravity of the proceedings at Rastatt is equalled only by the levity of those who took part in them. That German princes of all degrees should have paid assiduous court to the representatives of the victorious Republic was perhaps consonant with human nature: that they should have played altogether for their own hands was a natural consequence of the selfish particularism—the *Kleinstaaterei*—which had characterized German politics for more than two hundred years; still there was no reason or fitness in glozing over the scramble for territory by profane and unseemly jests at the expense of the body of which they were still members.

At Rastatt there were endless intrigue and discussion, but little business was done. Bonaparte looked in upon its proceedings for a week at the end of 1797 and drew his own conclusions from what he observed. The invincible jealousy of the two leading German Powers; the concentration of the attention both of Austria and

Prussia upon their own territorial and dynastic interests; their complete and callous indifference to the well-being of the Empire; the particularism of the lesser princes, and their obvious inclination towards France—all this was readily apprehended by Bonaparte, and the apprehension inspired his policy in the near future. Meanwhile, the French envoys at Rastatt played a strong hand with undeniable skill. France, indeed, was the only Power which emerged from the Congress with any tangible advantage. In March 1798 virtually the whole of the left bank of the Rhine was, with about 3½ million inhabitants, formally ceded to France; it was reorganized in four departments and took its place in the French legal and administrative system.

Then came the question as to how the dispossessed princes, including the rulers of Austria and Prussia, were to obtain compensation on the right bank. That compensation could be provided only by the secularization or disestablishment of the ecclesiastical states. But when it came to the point of working out details the Emperor shrank from a transaction, the honesty of which was dubious and the expediency questionable.

Besides, France had shown a decided inclination towards Prussia against Austria, and towards the smaller states against both. Apart from the acquisition of the Rhinelands now accomplished, France had come to the Congress only to accentuate dissensions between the German princes. It soon became clear that the peace concluded at Campo-Formio would not be of long duration.

In February 1798 France invaded the Papal States and

proclaimed the Roman Republic; in April she proclaimed the Helvetic Republic, and on May 18 Bonaparte himself set sail from Toulon at the head of a great expedition destined for the conquest of Egypt. The Second Coalition was the result: Austria, Russia, Great Britain, Naples, Turkey, and Portugal combined against the French Republic.

The neutrality of Prussia.

Of the great Powers one only stood aloof. No arguments availed to draw Prussia out of her inglorious neutrality. England in particular made every effort to induce Prussia to come in, if for no other reason than to help in sweeping the French out of Holland. Prussia, however, was immovable, and her selfish and short-sighted policy was partly responsible for the failure of the Anglo-Russian expedition to Holland in 1799. Pitt's original intention had been to attack Holland through Hanover; but for the success of that scheme Prussian co-operation was practically indispensable. Prussia, though always susceptible in regard to Holland, withstood Pitt's blandishments, and the whole enterprise was a disastrous failure.

War of the Second Coalition.

With the war of the Second Coalition we must not concern ourselves: Napoleon's success in Egypt rendered abortive by the victories of the English fleet; the campaign of 1799 made memorable by the success of Austria on the upper Rhine, and the brilliant strategy of Suvaroff in Italy; Napoleon's dramatic and opportune return to France; the *coup d'état* of 18th Brumaire, and the overthrow of the Directory; Napoleon's attainment of the Consulate; the campaign of 1800 crowned by Napoleon's great victory at Marengo (June 14) and Moreau's at

Hohenlinden (December 3)—at all these things Prussia looked on unmoved and apparently unconcerned. By the end of 1800 her great rival was once more at the mercy of Napoleon, and in February 1801 was compelled to accept the Treaty of Lunéville.

That treaty was the complement and confirmation of those of Basel and Campo-Formio. Austria recognized not only the Cisalpine Republic in North Italy, but, in addition, the Ligurian (Genoa), Helvetic, and Batavian Republics, and at the same time she formally confirmed the cession of the Rhinelands to France. Thus the Empire lost 150,000 square miles of territory and 3½ million people—constituting about one-seventh of the whole. It was the beginning of the end of the mediaeval Empire. The princes of the Empire, as represented in the Diet, claimed to be allowed to settle the details of the redistribution of territory; but the internecine jealousies proved to be too acute for mutual adjustment, and France and Russia were called in as impartial arbitrators. The work was actually done in Paris, and to Paris, therefore, there flocked, in the course of 1801, a mob of German princes and diplomatists, all eager to make the best terms possible for their respective states.

Witty pens have described the scenes enacted during these months in the French capital: the assiduous court paid to Talleyrand and his secretary, Mathieu; fat German princes playing blind-man's-buff and hunt-the-slipper with the minister's little niece; solemn German diplomatists caressing his wife's poodle; on every side a shameless orgy of intrigue and bribery, steadily kept up until there was no longer a city or a bishopric to be had

for cajolery or cash.[1] Treitschke has likened the spectacle to that of a swarm of flies carousing on the festering wounds of the Fatherland.

The Act of Mediatization.

Meanwhile, Bonaparte proceeded steadily with the task of reconstructing Germany in the interests of France. His principles of redistribution were few and simple: to penalize and isolate Austria; to cajole and indemnify Prussia; and, above all, to enlarge and consolidate the secondary states such as Bavaria, Baden, and Würtemberg, and to bind them, by ties of gratitude and interest, even more closely to France. The details of redistribution were eventually settled in the *Reichsdeputationshauptschluss*, or Principal Resolution of the Imperial Deputation (February 25, 1803), and embodied in the so-called *Act of Mediatization*.

The Act of Mediatization affected only the non-hereditary sovereignties: the Ecclesiastical States and the Free Imperial Cities. The turn of the hereditary sovereigns was to come later. But the changes wrought in 1803 were sufficiently imposing. Previous to that date the Empire had contained some three hundred and sixty states. Of these less than half were permitted to survive. The imperial cities were reduced from fifty-one to six, the survivors being Hamburg, Bremen, Lubeck, Frankfort-on-Main, Nuremberg, and Augsburg. The old circles of the Empire finally disappeared, and all the ecclesiastical states except one were suppressed. In this process the electorates of Köln and Trier disappeared, and the third ecclesiastical electorate—that of Mainz—was transferred to Regensburg. Bavaria emerged with territories not only

[1] Cf. e.g. H. von Gagern, *Mein Antheil an der Politik*, i. 110.

enlarged but consolidated; surrendering about 4,000 square miles of territory with 580,000 inhabitants on the west of the Rhine, and gaining 6,000 miles with about 850,000 subjects on the east of it, mainly at the expense of the bishoprics of Würzburg, Bamberg, Freising, Augsburg, and Passau. She got also a priory, twelve abbeys, and seventeen free cities. Similar treatment was accorded to Baden. The Grand Duke himself was raised to the rank of an elector, and in exchange for territory in the west he obtained seventeen towns, including Mannheim and Heidelberg, with lands which had belonged to the Bishops of Constance, Speier, Strasburg, and Basel on the east bank of the Rhine, and ten abbeys—in all about ten times as many subjects as he had lost. The Duke of Würtemberg and the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel also received the electoral hat and large accessions of territory. Austria, compelled to look on at the aggrandizement of the secondary states, herself gained nothing directly in Germany, and indirectly lost much. Not least through the extension and consolidation of the dominions of her great rival.

Position of Prussia.

The immediate gains to Prussia were more than considerable; the ultimate significance to her of the changes then effected was transcendant. Territorially, Frederick William did not get precisely what he wanted. He had coveted the great bishoprics of Würzburg and Bamberg, in order to extend Hohenzollern influence in the heart of Germany. But that did not suit Napoleon's game. He wanted to thrust Prussia northwards and eastwards: to counterbalance the power of Austria upon the Danube by another powerful state upon the Oder and Vistula. Central and Western Germany was reserved for the

clients of France. Consequently Prussia, having been compelled to relinquish over 1,000 square miles of territory and 122,000 subjects on the left bank of the Rhine, gained nearly 5,000 square miles and 580,000 inhabitants to the east of it. Her acquisitions included the city and part of the bishopric of Münster, the Westphalian bishoprics of Hildesheim and Paderborn, six Westphalian abbeys, the free cities of Mühlhausen, Nordhausen, and Goslar, together with Erfurt and the Thuringian lands of the see of Mainz. As compared with the acquisitions of Bavaria those of Prussia may appear almost insignificant. But her gains were not to be reckoned solely or even primarily in territory, subjects, and revenue. Almost all the injuries inflicted upon the Habsburgs must be reckoned to the ultimate advantage of their rivals: the exclusion of the ecclesiastical princes from the Imperial Diet; the consequent shifting in the balance of political power from Roman Catholicism to Protestantism; the absorption of nearly all the free cities of the Empire: the elevation of the secondary principalities—all these things tended immediately to the disadvantage of the Habsburg Emperor and, in a future more or less distant, to the aggrandizement of the Hohenzollern. That Bonaparte desired or anticipated the latter result is improbable. Some concessions had to be made to Prussia to reward Frederick William for his subservient neutrality, and to bring up the Hohenzollern in the north to a plane of equality with the Habsburg in the south. The rise of Prussia to a position of predominance in Germany was not and at this time could not have been foreseen; still less the fact that her predominance would ultimately be

achieved and consolidated by leading a united Germany against France. The task of the moment was to break beyond chance of repair the Empire in Germany; to maintain the French frontier on the Rhine; to make sure that beyond the Rhine the Hohenzollern should balance the power of the Habsburg, and that both should be held in check by the existence of considerable states, of secondary rank, indebted for their present and dependent for their future position upon the favour of France. All this, by 1803, Bonaparte had achieved.

The reconstitution of Germany was not yet, however, complete. The appetite of the princes was whetted rather than appeased by the Act of Mediatization. The secularization of the great ecclesiastical principalities was followed by measures of wholesale disestablishment and disendowment applied to institutions which had no political position. In this process the monasteries and other religious bodies, hospitals, and universities all suffered. Reforming activity and lust of lucre found their next victims in the imperial knights, who were deprived of jurisdiction they had long exercised and valuable dues they had long enjoyed. That in these processes many individuals suffered, through no fault of their own, is undeniable; much that was eminently picturesque and wholly inoffensive in the life of Germany was ruthlessly destroyed; yet, on the whole, it must be confessed that by the concentration of authority the lot of the people was sensibly ameliorated: taxation, if not lighter, became more equal and less uncertain; justice more even-handed and less capricious; economic conditions perceptibly though slowly improved.

From 1801 to 1805 the Continental Powers were at peace with France; save only the prince who to the electorate of Hanover had added the Crown of Great Britain and Ireland. England had in 1802 made peace with Napoleon in the Treaty of Amiens on terms which do not concern this narrative, but in 1803 the two Powers were again at war, a war destined to last for more than a decade. Napoleon's first move after the renewal of war was directed against the continental possessions of the English king. Hanover.

Hitherto the fact of England's belligerency had been held not to involve the German possessions of the English king; the neutrality of Hanover had been respected. That neutrality had been specifically included in the guarantee given to Prussia by France in the Treaty of Basel.

Apart, however, from this specific guarantee there was no Power in Europe, not excluding England herself, to whom Napoleon's attack upon Hanover was of such momentous consequence as to Prussia. The menace of a French attack upon Hanover in 1756 had detached Frederick the Great from the French alliance, and had induced him to take the side of England in the Seven Years' War. But if the neutralization of Hanover was vital to Prussia in 1756 it was much more so after the Act of Mediatization. Hanover now cut the Hohenzollern dominions in two; no Prussian sovereign could therefore regard with unconcern the presence of a foreign army in the electorate.

The natural susceptibilities of Prussia were so far recognized by Napoleon, that on the eve of the renewal of

war with England he sent General Duroc to Berlin to warn Frederick William that he was meditating an occupation of Hanover. The moment was a critical one in the history of Prussia. The situation demanded a prompt decision. Had Stein been in power we cannot doubt that not only would the decision have been prompt but that it would have been followed by immediate action. In what direction would a patriot like Stein have moved in 1803? Plainly there were two courses open to Prussia; and only two. Either she might have declared unequivocally that a French move on Hanover would be treated as a *casus belli*; or she might have occupied the electorate in overwhelming force herself. To neither of these obvious alternatives could Frederick William make up his mind. Weak in will; vacillating in purpose; neither clear-sighted nor far-sighted; constant only in his desire to preserve Prussian neutrality, Frederick William approached each belligerent in turn. To England he offered his mediation on condition of an immediate evacuation of the island of Malta—a step on which Napoleon, in negotiation with England, had laid great stress. The offer was curtly rejected by Pitt. Rebuffed by England, Frederick William turned to Napoleon, and pledged his personal security for the payment of any indemnity which Napoleon might think proper to extort from the electorate. The pledge did not tempt Napoleon nor deflect him from his purpose.

In May 1803 a French division, 17,000 strong, under General Mortier, occupied Hanover, practically without resistance on the part either of the government or of the inhabitants. Had there been leadership, either military

or political, the Hanoverian army was in numbers amply sufficient to have offered a vigorous opposition to General Mortier's force. But in every respect, political, economic, and intellectual, the electorate was backward and lethargic. The government, though unenlightened, was not oppressive, and the English connexion seems to have been far from unpopular. The crushing financial burdens laid upon the province by the French during the next two years would in any case have led the Hanoverians to regard the English rule not merely with complacency but with positive affection. The French occupation, though prolonged for two years, was not followed by formal annexation. Nevertheless, Napoleon treated Hanover as a conquered province. Very soon he made it clear not only that he meant to extort the last farthing of ready money from the inhabitants, but to impoverish their permanent resources.

In July 1803 a French force was sent to Cuxhaven, which belonged to the city of Hamburg, to keep out English goods which sought entrance into Germany by the Elbe and the Weser. England's immediate reply was to threaten a blockade of the two rivers. Here again Prussia's interests were vitally engaged. Such a blockade must needs deal a serious blow at the linen industry of Silesia. Still Frederick William could not brace himself to decisive action. On the contrary, he met with obstinate immobility every effort made by Napoleon to tempt him to abandon his neutrality. The offer of the Imperial Crown of Germany was not perhaps intrinsically attractive, coming, as it did, at the moment when Francis was assuming an Imperial Crown of Austria and Napoleon

was crowned as Emperor of the French. The offer of Hanover, made in the following year (1805), left the king equally unmoved. Not so some of his most trusted counsellors. The Duke of Brunswick and Count Haugwitz were all for acceptance; but although Frederick William had himself occupied Hanover for six months when, in 1801, he adhered to the Armed Neutrality of the northern Powers, he had no mind, in 1805, for war with England any more than with Napoleon.

Not that he was insensible to the insolence of Napoleon. On the contrary, he was deeply shocked by the judicial murder of the Duc d'Enghien (March 20, 1804) and by the shameless abduction of Sir George Rumbold, the British Minister in Hamburg (November 1804). The arrogant contempt thus shown by Napoleon for the rights and susceptibilities of friendly sovereigns—in this case the Elector of Baden and the Senate of the Free City of Hamburg respectively—made a deep impression upon the mind of Frederick William. Nor did Metternich, at that time Austrian ambassador in Berlin, neglect any opportunity for pointing the moral. That these things all contributed to the change of policy, already contemplated and soon to be announced by the Prussian king, cannot be doubted.

The War of the Third Coalition.

The final impulse to action came, however, from another quarter. England, as we have seen, had been at war with France since 1803. In 1805 Pitt succeeded in forming a Third Coalition, which was joined by the Emperor Francis, the Tzar Alexander of Russia, and Gustavus IV of Sweden. Of the German states, Bavaria, Baden, and Würtemberg fought on the side of France.

For two years past Napoleon had been concentrating a great army at Boulogne, in the hope of effecting an invasion of England. That hope was dissipated by the great naval campaign which culminated in Nelson's victory at Trafalgar (October 21). Two months, however, before Trafalgar, Napoleon had realized that the scheme so carefully and skilfully devised had miscarried; Sir Robert Calder's engagement with Admiral Villeneuve off Cape Finisterre (July 22) had ruined Napoleon's chance; without a moment's hesitation his plans were changed, and, almost before his enemies could learn that the Boulogne camp was broken up, Napoleon and his army had appeared on the Danube. The Austrian general Mack suddenly found himself surrounded at Ulm, and on October 20 was compelled, with the whole of his fine army, to capitulate. The road to Vienna was now open. The Austrian capital was occupied by Murat on November 13, and on December 2 Napoleon himself inflicted a crushing defeat upon a combined Austrian and Russian force at Austerlitz.

Prussia and the War.

Meanwhile, Frederick William had at last made up his mind to intervene. Hitherto neither threats nor importunities nor proferred bribes had availed to penetrate the obstinacy of the Prussian king. Napoleon had offered Hanover; the Tzar Alexander had threatened that the Russian army, if refused a passage through Silesia on its march to the upper Danube, would effect a passage by force; Pitt had hinted that Belgium might fall to Prussia. Nothing moved Frederick William. But early in October news reached Berlin that Bernadotte, in order to reach Bavaria in the minimum of time, had marched his

troops through the Prussian Principality of Anspach (October 3). The news roused Frederick William to fury. He mobilized his army; he smiled upon Pitt's plan, a repetition of that which had issued in disaster in 1799, for a joint Anglo-Russian expedition to start from Hanover for the liberation of Holland; and finally he gave ready permission to the Tzar to send the Russian army through Silesia. A few weeks later (October 28) the Tzar himself reached Berlin, where he received an enthusiastic welcome, for the purpose of conferring personally with the Prussian monarch.

Prussia and England.

Almost at the moment when the Tzar arrived in Prussia Pitt dispatched a trusted and confidential envoy, the Earl of Harrowby, to convey the English proposals to Berlin. The offer which Harrowby was empowered to make sufficiently indicates the importance which Pitt attached to the co-operation of Prussia. In addition to a yearly subsidy of £12 10*s.* for each Prussian soldier serving in France, Pitt undertook to secure for Prussia the Austrian Netherlands and the intervening German lands between Belgium and the Prussian territories in Westphalia. He further promised that on the conclusion of a general peace England would restore all her oversea acquisitions except Malta and Cape Colony.[1]

Before Lord Harrowby reached Berlin Frederick William had concluded with the Tzar the Treaty of Potsdam (November 3). Prussia undertook to intervene with a force of 180,000 men unless, within four weeks, Napoleon would agree to the terms to be forthwith proposed to him. The French Emperor was to recognize the inde-

[1] Rose, *Pitt and the Great War*, pp. 538 seq.

pendence of Germany, Holland, Switzerland, and Naples; to resign the crown of Italy; to restore Piedmont to the King of Sardinia and indemnify him with Genoa, Parma, and Piacenza, and to restore to Austria Venice up to the Mincio. The price of Prussian assistance was to be paid by England in the shape of the cession of Hanover. This latter stipulation was embodied in a secret article of the Treaty of Potsdam and was accepted by Alexander only with the greatest reluctance.[1]

No sooner were the terms agreed upon than Count Haugwitz was sent off to the French head-quarters to present the ultimatum to Napoleon, while a special Russian envoy, Count d'Oubril, was sent to London to procure Pitt's assent to the Hanoverian deal. Needless to say that, though prepared to go to the extreme length of concession to Prussia, Pitt was not willing even to consider the cession of Hanover.

Count Haugwitz arrived at the French head-quarters at Brünn on November 29, and was immediately admitted to the presence of the emperor, with whom he had a prolonged conference.

Napoleon had not the slightest intention of consenting to the Prussian terms, but he meant to evade any positive reply until the issue of the great battle, now pending, was decided. Consequently Haugwitz was cajoled with half-promises, and at last was sent off to Vienna to discuss the matter with Talleyrand. Talleyrand, of course, had his orders from Napoleon, and Haugwitz was amused at Vienna until decisive news arrived from Moravia. By the great victory at Austerlitz Napoleon had extricated

[1] See Rose, op. cit., p. 540.

himself from all his immediate difficulties; he dictated the Treaty of Pressburg to Austria, and that of Schönbrunn to Prussia.

The Treaties of Pressburg and Schönbrunn.

In the Treaty of Campo-Formio and even in that of Lunéville Austria, if not actually caressed by Napoleon, had been treated with curious leniency; in that of Pressburg she was crushed to the earth. She was compelled to resign Venetia to the kingdom of Italy and to recognize Napoleon as its king; to Bavaria, now raised by Napoleon to the dignity of a kingdom, the whole of the Tyrol, the Vorarlberg, and several bishoprics and minor principalities; to Würtemberg, also converted into a kingdom, and to Baden her outlying provinces in western Germany. Thus Austria, cut off from the Rhine, from the Adriatic, from contact with Switzerland and with Italy, was reduced to the rank of a third-rate Power. Less disastrous but even more humiliating were the terms imposed at Schönbrunn upon Prussia. The latter was required to cede Anspach to Bavaria, to accept Hanover from Napoleon, and to close the ports of North Germany to English ships and commerce. Frederick William's obstinate adherence to the policy of neutrality had at last brought him to the position of a receiver of stolen goods.

War with England.

In bestowing this embarrassing gift upon Prussia Napoleon's object was, of course, to force Prussia from her neutrality into a war with England. England treated the matter with disconcerting indifference. Prussia protested that the occupation of Hanover would be only temporary. Fox, however, described her conduct as 'a compound of everything that is contemptible in

servility with everything that is odious in rapacity'. The description was not less just than mordant. But England took little notice of this formidable accession to the ranks of her enemies except to seize some 400 Prussian ships which happened at the moment to be in English ports and to inflict irreparable damage upon the foreign trade of Prussia.

End of the Holy Roman Empire.

In the meantime, Napoleon completed the work begun at Rastatt and carried a stage further by the Act of Mediatization. That work was the final destruction of the last remnants of the Holy Roman Empire, and the reconstitution of a great part of Germany under a new Charlemagne, with some real claim to be regarded as a veritable Emperor of the West. For this crowning step the way had been prepared by Napoleon on the eve of the Ulm-Austerlitz campaign. In the early autumn of 1805 treaties were concluded with the client states, Bavaria, Baden, Würtemberg, by which they agreed to furnish considerable contingents to the army of France. That army marched, so its general had declared, to 'secure the independence of the German Empire'. The official organ of the Empire—the Diet of Regensburg—so far accepted this profession of Napoleon's purpose as to declare its neutrality, while by the South German press the triumphal progress of the French arms was saluted with 'dithyrambic enthusiasm'.[1] For the Diet itself Napoleon had nothing but deserved contempt, describing it with accuracy as 'no more than a miserable monkey-house'. Its course was nearly run. 'There will be no more Diet at Regensburg,' wrote Napoleon to Talleyrand

[1] Fisher, op. cit., p. 103 and seq. for further details.

in May 1806, 'since Regensburg will belong to the Empire.' The Treaty of Pressburg had expressly provided that the ruling Princes should enjoy 'complete and undivided sovereignty over their own states'. Thus were 'shattered the last links of dependence which bound the three Courts to the Chief of the Empire'.[1] It remained to forge the new fetters. Throughout the summer of 1806 Napoleon was busy at the task, and on July 17 the Treaty of the Confederation of the Rhine was signed in Paris. The Kings of Bavaria and Würtemberg, Charles of Dalberg, Archbishop of Regensburg and Arch-Chancellor of the Empire, the Elector of Baden, the Duke of Berg, and the Landgrave of Hesse-Darmstadt, together with nine minor princes, definitely separated from the German Empire and accepted the protection of Napoleon, whom they pledged themselves to support with an army of 63,000 men. In this way a population of some 8,000,000 people became for military purposes an integral part of the French Empire. The armies of the Confederation were organized by French officers; the frontiers were fortified by French engineers, and foreign policy was dictated from France. The six sovereigns named above were to form a College of Kings; the nine minor sovereigns were to constitute a College of Princes, and the two Colleges were to form the Diet of the Confederation.

There still remained the task of internal reconstruction. This was rapidly effected. The Confederate States absorbed a large number of the smaller principalities; many of the local restrictions and exemptions which had

[1] Fisher, p. 108.

impinged upon their absolute powers were abolished; administration became more orderly and uniform, and taxation was equalized and systematized.

On August 1 the Emperor of the French announced to the Diet of Regensburg that he 'no longer recognized the existence of the Germanic Constitution, while acknowledging the entire and absolute sovereignty of each of the princes whose states at present compose Germany'. On August 6 the Emperor Francis formally renounced the title of Holy Roman Emperor, and that hoary anachronism at last came to a dishonoured end. With an intelligent appreciation of coming events the Emperor had, two years before this, assumed the brand-new but not inappropriate title of Emperor of Austria; the real sovereignty of Germany had already been transferred to Paris. The new Charlemagne had arrived; the empire of the old Charlemagne was dissolved. Its dissolution, as Professor Seeley reminds us, marks only the last stage in the process by which the German revolution was effected. In that process the Government, which down to 1803 had been largely ecclesiastical, was completely secularized; the German Church was disendowed; and 'an intricate medley of small and heterogeneous states' were consolidated 'into a comparatively small group of states moderately large and resembling each other'.[1]

The downfall of Prussia.

Two months after the dissolution of the Empire Napoleon annihilated the might of Prussia on the field of Jena. We must now review the events which led up to that catastrophe. Though Austria concluded peace with Napoleon after Austerlitz, England and Russia still

[1] Seeley, *Life and Times of Stein*, i. 212.

remained at war with him. But Prussia's warlike temperature cooled with great rapidity, and after Austerlitz her message of defiance to Napoleon was converted into one of congratulation. Napoleon accepted the felicitations at their true value and bade Prussia make war upon England. These orders she did not venture to disobey. At the same time, while Haugwitz maintained friendly relations with France, Hardenberg, who shared with him the foreign office, continued to be on good terms with Russia. Prussia, in fact, was pursuing the tactics, to which Frederick William III accustomed her, of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. Napoleon's attitude was for the moment one of tolerant contempt. His hands were full with the task of reconstituting Germany, and, provided Prussia embroiled herself beyond recall with England, other matters could wait. Prussia might even be caressed. Consequently there was talk, in the spring of 1806, of a North-German Confederation under the Hohenzollern, who might even be permitted, as a counterpoise to the new Austrian Empire in the south, to assume the Imperial title in the north. The idea, in view of subsequent developments, is interesting; but, for the moment, it came to nothing, owing to the determined opposition of Saxony, Hesse-Cassel, and the Mecklenburgs.

So matters stood when (August 6, 1806) the news reached Berlin that in the peace negotiations with the new ministry in England [1] Napoleon had accepted, as a basis, the restoration of Hanover. 'Le Hanovre', such

[1] Pitt died January 23, 1806, and Fox and Grenville then united to form the ministry of 'all the talents'.

were Talleyrand's words, 'ne fera pas de difficulté.' But if Hanover were not to stand in the way of peace with England, the idea of its restoration decided the issue of war at Berlin. And well it might. Hanover was the sole tangible asset that Frederick William had to show for insults innumerable and abject humiliation. And now, without a word to Prussia, this dearly-bought acquisition was to be tossed back to England. Is it matter for surprise that this culminating insult should have stung even King Frederick William into action? On August 9 orders were given for the mobilization of the army, which early in the year had, with supreme folly, been disbanded. The issue between peace and war still hung in the balance. A few weeks later it was decided by an insolent outrage perpetrated by Napoleon. On August 25 a Nuremberg bookseller, Palm, was executed by order of a court martial for having sold copies of a pamphlet, *Germany in her deep humiliation*. The peculiar significance of this crime was not lost upon Prussia, and on October 1 war was declared.

Jena and after.

Within three weeks the great military monarchy had collapsed. It was just twenty years since Frederick the Great had died. During those years nothing had been done to bring the Prussian army up to the new standard required by the rapid development of the art of war. Organization, drill, tactics, were what Frederick had left them. The officers were the same, twenty years older and debilitated by inaction. Of seven infantry commanders five were over seventy; of the cavalry generals two only were under sixty-five. 'A few far-seeing men in Prussia had', as Lord Roberts points out,

'recognized the danger that was impending, and had urged that the whole military system required reconstruction and revitalizing. Many schemes of reform had been proposed during the years that immediately preceded the catastrophe of Jena, but . . . nothing had been done.' The moral, he who runs may read. 'One cannot read the story of the Jena campaign . . . without realizing from the tragedy of Prussia in 1806 . . . the fate, amazing in its swiftness and appalling in its severity, which may at any moment overtake a state which exists in fancied security, based on traditions of an heroic past, and wrapped in a selfish indifference, hoping, ostrich-like, to escape the danger it refuses to see.' [1]

The Prussian army was as conceited as it was incompetent. 'It possesses', said General Rüchel, 'several generals equal to Bonaparte.' In numbers it was not despicable. Including the 20,000 troops contributed by Saxony, the Duke of Brunswick and Prince Hohenlohe found themselves in command of 140,000 men, concentrated near Jena on the Saale. A great French army, 200,000 strong, had meanwhile assembled on the upper Main. A preliminary encounter at Saalfeld (October 10) ended disastrously for the Prussians, and four days later the decisive blow fell. On October 14, Napoleon inflicted a crushing defeat upon Hohenlohe at Jena, while Davoust disposed of the forces of Brunswick at Auerstadt. At a single blow the field-army of Prussia was annihilated; Brunswick himself fell mortally wounded; 20,000 men were killed or wounded; 200 guns were taken, and

[1] Ap. Loraine Petre, *Napoleon's Conquest of Prussia*, pp. xi, xiii.

innumerable prisoners. But worse was to come. The Prussian fortresses were strongly garrisoned, and if defended with resolution Napoleon's onward march might have been indefinitely delayed, if not arrested. One after another they opened their gates to the French armies: Erfurt, Halle, Spandau (October 25); Prenzlau, some thirty miles west of Stettin, was surrendered by Hohenlohe on October 28; Stettin itself fell on the 29th; Blücher, who had made a noble effort to save a desperate situation, was caught near Lübeck on November 7; and on November 8 the great fortress of Magdeburg, with a garrison of over 20,000 men, capitulated to an inferior French force. Meanwhile, Davoust had occupied Berlin without resistance on October 25, and two days later the French Emperor made a triumphal entry into the Prussian capital.

Napoleon in Berlin.

In Berlin, Bonaparte behaved like the vulgar conqueror he was. With his own hands he desecrated the tomb of Frederick the Great at Potsdam, and sent off his sword and scarf to the *Invalides*; he scrawled obscene insults against the Queen Luise on the walls of her own palace; he demolished the obelisk on the battle-field of Rossbach; he carried off to Paris the figure of Victory from the Brandenburg gate, and drove the Prussian Guards like cattle down the Unter den Linden—a spectacle for the burghers to mock at.[1] He did not, however, devote all his attention to spectacular effects. From Berlin he issued the famous *Decree* (November 21) which was

[1] Henderson, *History of Germany*, ii. 264.

formally to inaugurate the Continental Blockade and bring Great Britain to her knees.

He then dealt with Prussia's allies. Saxony was treated with a leniency amply repaid in 1813. The Elector was raised to kingly rank, but his country together with the smaller Saxon duchies was drawn into the Rhenish Confederation. Out of Hesse-Cassel and Brunswick the new kingdom of Westphalia was constructed for Jerome Bonaparte.

The war in East Prussia.

But beyond the Vistula the Russian army was still in the field, and thither the Prussian Court, with the remnant of the Prussian army, had retired. Meanwhile, Frederick William had given the first sign of a reviving spirit. Count Haugwitz was dismissed, and on November 21 the Prussian king refused his assent to a Convention, dictated by Napoleon, under the terms of which the remaining fortresses were to be surrendered, the Prussian army to be withdrawn into East Prussia, and Frederick William, as a vassal of France, to turn his arms against Russia. It was of good omen that the king's refusal was inspired by Stein acting in conjunction with Hardenberg. The war was to go on.

Master of Brandenburg, Napoleon marched into Poland, where he was enthusiastically acclaimed. He promised to proclaim Polish independence, but only on condition that the Poles put 30,000 men into the field. 'I wish to see if you deserve to be a nation.' The sequel would seem to show that Napoleon was not satisfied that they did, for after Tilsit Polish Prussia was offered to Alexander. On December 18 the Emperor reached Warsaw, where he hoped to give his army three months'

rest. In a few weeks, however, he was again in the field, and on February 7 he was severely checked at Eylau by the Russians under Bennigsen. After Eylau Napoleon tried to induce Prussia to conclude a separate peace; but on the advice of Hardenberg Frederick William refused. On the contrary he cemented his alliance with Russia by the Convention of Bartenstein (April 26), and made efforts to secure further assistance from Austria, Great Britain, and the Scandinavian states. On May 24, however, the great fortress of Danzig surrendered, and on June 14 Napoleon inflicted a severe defeat upon the Russian army at Friedland. A few days later the Russians applied for an armistice, which was granted by Napoleon. For the latter had, with characteristic rapidity, decided upon his next move. After all, the real enemy was not Russia, nor even Prussia. Prussia was incidentally to be crushed; but if Alexander would join him against England, France and Russia could divide the world between them.

The treaties of Tilsit.

In order to ensure complete secrecy the two Emperors met in a pavilion erected on a raft which was moored in the middle of the Niemen. Frederick William was compelled to wait on the bank to learn the fate of his unhappy kingdom. Napoleon and Alexander having made up their minds to a complete *volte-face*, the bargain was soon struck. The Vistula was to be the western boundary of Russia, who was to recognize the Confederation of the Rhine and the Napoleonic kingdom of Naples, Holland, and Westphalia; Danzig was to become a free city; Polish Prussia was offered to the Tzar with the title of king, but Alexander was shrewd enough to decline

PRUSSIA
AFTER TILSIT
DENMARK
SWEDEN
BALTIC SEA
R. Memel
Tilsit
Königsberg
Heligoland
Kiel
HOLSTEIN
Stralsund
Colberg
Danzig
R. Oder
Ludecko
Hamburg
Bremen
MECKLENBURG
POMMERN
PRUSSIA
Stettin
Thorn
R. Vistula
Warsaw
R. Elbe
BRANDENBURG
G. D. OF
WARSAW
HOLLAND
R. Weser
Hanover
Berlin
Magdeburg
Münster
WESTPHALIA
Gottingen
Halle
SAXONY
Leipzig
Dresden
Breslau
R. Rhine
Aachen
BERG
Cologne
ERFURT
(to France)
Jena
SILESIA
R. Meuse
Coblenz
HESSE
Frankfurt
Prague
Königgratz
GALICIA
FRANCE
Mainz
Worms
Bamberg
R. Main
BOHEMIA
AUSTRIA
Speier
K. OF
BAVARIA
MORAVIA
R. Moldau
Austerlitz
Rastadt
Baden
BADEN
WURTEMBERG
Wagram
K. OF
HUNGARY
Strassburg
Ulm
R. Danube
Munich
Vienna
Pressburg
Salzburg
Basel
SWITZERLAND
Prussian Territory
H.S. Hamlin
Oxford

the tempting bait. Thereupon the whole of the territory acquired by Prussia in the second and third partitions was erected into a grand duchy of Warsaw and conferred upon the King of Saxony. So much of the Tilsit Treaty was made public. The secret stipulations were even more significant. These provided that Russia should cede the Ionian Isles to France, and should make common cause with Napoleon against Great Britain if the latter refused to come to terms by November 1. In return Russia was to get Finland from Sweden, Moldavia and Wallachia from Turkey. Sweden, Denmark, and Portugal were to be coerced into war with England.

A separate Treaty (July 9) embodied the details of Prussia's humiliation. Napoleon's original idea had been literally to expunge the Hohenzollern dominions from the map of Europe, and to make the Vistula the boundary between his own Empire and that of the Tzar. Out of regard, however, for his new ally he consented to restore a remnant of territory to Prussia. She was stripped of all her territories west of the Elbe to enlarge the kingdom of Westphalia, and of all that she had acquired from Poland since 1772 for the advantage of Saxony; she was required to pay a crushing indemnity and to maintain a French garrison until it was paid; to recognize the Napoleonic kingdoms in Germany and elsewhere, and to keep her harbours hermetically sealed against English trade. A year later her army was cut down to 42,000 men.

At Tilsit Prussia reached the nadir of her fortunes. Her population was reduced by about 50 per cent., from

nearly ten millions to less than five; her army was reduced by four-fifths; her prestige was shattered. Until yesterday the rival of Austria and the equal of Russia, she now barely attained the rank of a second-class German Power.

Causes of Prussia's downfall.

What were the causes of a downfall so rapid, of a catastrophe so crushing and complete? Some of them ought to have emerged with tolerable clearness from the preceding narrative; but it may be convenient to attempt a succinct and comprehensive summary.

It has been frequently pointed out that Prussia has owed nothing to the beneficence of nature. Denied any well-defined or easily defensible frontiers; cursed with an arid soil and an ungenial climate; deficient in convenient harbours and condemned to a contracted coast-line, Prussia is pre-eminently the work of man's hands, a highly artificial manufactured product. She owes her pride of place to a remarkable succession of great rulers, a line of kings who have pursued undeviatingly and with single-minded devotion a carefully thought-out policy, designed to build up, out of the most unpromising materials, a great political edifice in Central Europe. To that end they maintained an army out of all proportion to the population or to the economic resources of the state. The whole administrative system was devised with a view to the maintenance of military efficiency. Finance and commerce subserved the same object. 'La Guerre', as Mirabeau wrote, 'est l'industrie nationale de la Prusse.' To Prussia's continued greatness, then, two things were essential: a succession of rulers of pre-eminent ability and energy, and a military machine in a perpetual state

of efficiency. During the two decades which followed upon the death of Frederick the Great both essentials were lacking. Kings and statesmen were less than mediocre in quality, and the army sank into self-complacent inefficiency.

This was the primary reason for the collapse of 1806. But there were others. Excessive concentration upon a single object is apt with nations, as with individuals, to defeat its own object. 'Most of these military states are safe', said Aristotle, 'only while they are at war, but fall when they have acquired their empire; like unused iron they lose their edge in time of peace; and for this the legislator is to blame, never having taught them the life of peace. . . . Warlike pursuits, though generally to be deemed honourable, are not the supreme end of all things, but only a means.'[1] The iron of the Prussian army lost its edge after the Peace of 1795. And not the army only. The administrative system depended upon the efficiency of the personal ruler. Frederick William II was a compound of mysticism and debauchery; Frederick William III was as stupid as he was virtuous; and neither possessed a counsellor who could supply his own deficiency. The diplomacy of Prussia was as maladroit as her policy was selfish, thus in 1806 she was deservedly isolated. For ten years she had maintained a neutrality as pusillanimous as it was short-sighted. Hence, when the hour of trial came, she found herself without a friend. In 1806–7 she went through the furnace of affliction; she went through it alone, unpitied and unaided; she emerged from it chastened, purified, and regenerated.

[1] *Politics*, vii. 2, 14.

Her regeneration was due to a small group of remarkable men, with whose work the next chapter will be concerned.

For further reference:

BAILLEU: *Preussen und Frankreich*; RAMBAUD: *Les Français sur le Rhin*; HUEFFER: *Der Rastatter Congress*; FISHER: *Napoleonic Statesmanship: Germany*; LORAINE PETRE: *Napoleon's Conquest of Prussia*; and biographies of Napoleon, such as Fournier's and Rose's.

CHAPTER VII

THE REMAKING OF PRUSSIA, 1807–15

The War of Liberation

The Treaty of Tilsit marked for Prussia not only the nadir of degradation but the beginning of regeneration. Between 1807 and 1810 a group of enlightened statesmen carried through a series of reforms which transformed Prussia hardly less completely than those of the Constituent Assembly had transformed France. Reforms in Prussia.

Of these men the greatest was Heinrich Friedrich Karl Baron von Stein.[1] Born in 1757 in the State of Nassau, Stein was just fifty when in August 1807, at the hour of Prussia's greatest need, he was called to the first place in the counsels of the Prussian king. He had already served a considerable apprenticeship in the employment of the State. By birth an imperial knight, he was an immediate subject of the Empire and was destined by his parents to a place in the imperial law courts. He was educated mainly at the university of Göttingen; he read jurisprudence and political science, making a special study, for which at Göttingen there were exceptional facilities, of English political institutions. He left Göttingen Stein.

[1] For full details of the life of Stein reference should be made to Sir J. R. Seeley's biography, *The Life and Times of Stein*, 3 vols. Cambridge University Press, 1878.

disinclined for the legal profession, and, attracted by the policy and personality of 'Frederick the Unique', he decided to enter the civil service of Prussia (1780), and was assigned to the Department of Mines. In 1785 he was sent as Prussian Envoy to Mainz, Zweibrücken, and Darmstadt to obtain the adhesion of those courts to the Fürstenbund. In 1787 the Government tried to tempt this young man of thirty into diplomacy by the offer of two important embassies, first that at The Hague, and then that at Petersburg. Both offers were declined, and for twenty years Stein worked—ultimately as President, in the War and Domains Chambers of Westphalia. In 1804 he became Minister of State in the Central Government at Berlin, with special charge of excise, customs, manufactures, and trade. This meant in effect that Stein became responsible for Prussian finance. That he was far from satisfied with the administrative system in which he now held high place is clear from the memorandum which he prepared in 1806.[1] A study of that document enables us to understand the causes of the terrible collapse of Prussia. In particular, Stein took exception to the paramount influence exerted over the king by the Cabinet secretaries—the personal confidants of the king who interposed between his Majesty and the official Ministers of State. The memorandum was prepared early in 1806, and on November 29, after the catastrophe, Stein was offered but refused the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The king, deeply offended, told Stein that he was a 'refractory, insolent, obstinate, and disobedient official'. On January 3, 1807, the refractory official resigned, but in July

[1] This may be read *in extenso* in Seeley, i. 267.

Napoleon insisted upon the dismissal of Hardenberg, and suggested Stein as his successor. Hardenberg himself warmly supported the suggestion; Blücher and Niebuhr added their earnest entreaties, and in August 1807, a few weeks after the signature of the treaty of Tilsit, Stein consented to take up the heaviest burden ever imposed upon the shoulders of a statesman.

Scharnhorst and Gneisenau.

Before examining in detail the nature of the task and the manner in which it was accomplished, a few words may be said of Stein's fellow workers. The reorganization of the army was the work primarily of two men, Scharnhorst and Gneisenau. Gerhard Johann David von Scharnhorst was two years senior to Stein. By birth a Hanoverian, he served in the army of the Electorate in the campaigns of 1793–4, but in 1801, at the request of the Duke of Brunswick, he transferred his services and sword to Prussia. Already famous as a writer on military subjects, he became a professor in the Military Academy in Berlin. He fought at Jena and was Chief of the Staff to General Lestocq, who commanded the Prussian contingent at Eylau. After the Peace he became head of the military administration in Stein's 'Ministry'. Closely associated with Scharnhorst was August Wilhelm Antonius Neithardt von Gneisenau. Born in Saxony in 1760, and educated at Erfurt, he entered the service of the emperor, for whom he fought in the War of the Bavarian Succession (1778). He enlisted in the legion of German mercenaries hired by England for service against the American colonies, and on his return entered the Prussian army (1785). He saw service in Poland (1793–5); was slightly wounded at Saalfeld, where, as at Jena, he commanded

a battalion, and, after the retreat, he defended Colberg with a resolution not shared by most of his colleagues. His exploits at Colberg won him the friendship and admiration of Blücher, and in 1807 he was appointed a member of the Commission, presided over by Scharnhorst, for the reorganization of the Prussian army. Later on he had a high command at Leipzig, and served as Blücher's Chief of the Staff in the Waterloo campaign. Much of Blücher's fame was really due to Gneisenau's pre-eminent knowledge both of strategy and tactics. He died in 1831, having attained the rank of Field-Marshal.

Humboldt.

In Prussia the army and the school have always been closely co-ordinated. What Gneisenau and Scharnhorst did for military reform was accomplished for education by Karl Wilhelm Baron von Humboldt (1767–1835), the elder brother of the famous traveller Alexander, and himself a statesman and a scholar of high distinction. To these men, only one of whom, Humboldt, was a Prussian, with a few others, such as Niebuhr, the famous historian, and Prince von Hardenberg, stands the credit of one of the most remarkable political achievements of the nineteenth century. It was their task to remake Prussia.

Fichte.

Their objective is thus defined by Sir Robert Morier. It was 'to substitute an organic whole, in its entirety, for the inorganic machinery that had been gradually rotting ever since the death of Frederick the Great, and was now happily once for all broken to pieces'.[1] The spirit in which they approached their arduous work is clearly indicated by Stein himself. 'We started', he writes, 'from the fundamental idea of rousing a

[1] *Memoirs*, i. 189.

moral, religious, patriotic spirit in the nation, of inspiring it anew with courage, self-confidence, readiness for every sacrifice in the cause of independence of the foreigner, and national honour.' In the execution of the task thus outlined, in their appeal to a 'moral religious patriotic spirit', Stein and his colleagues owed an incalculable debt to the recent teaching of one of the greatest of German philosophers, Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814). Fichte, who had been professor of philosophy at Jena, came in 1799 to Berlin, where he delivered regular courses of public lectures. In the winter of 1804–5 his subject was 'The Characteristics of the Present Age'.[1] These lectures maintained a startling thesis: that 'a State which constantly seeks to increase its internal strength, is forced to desire the gradual abolition of all privileges and the establishment of equal rights for all men, in order that it, the State itself, may enter upon its true right, viz. to apply the whole surplus power of all its citizens, without exception, to the futherance of its own purposes. . . . We do indeed desire freedom and we ought to desire it; but true freedom can be obtained only by means of the highest obedience to law.'[2] What an amazing paradox must this have seemed to those who had learnt their political philosophy from Humboldt, and to whom Humboldt's *Limits of State Action* (1791) had seemed the last word of political wisdom. Humboldt's political theory was, of course, in perfect consonance with the particularist practice of the Germany of the

[1] Cf. *Werke*, vol. vii. There is a translation by Dr. W. Smith.

[2] Quoted by M. E. Sadler, *Germany in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 104, 105.

eighteenth century. The idea of the paramount State, still more, of a single paramount State, would have been as unthinkable to the German peoples as to Humboldt. 'Voltaire's saying that while France ruled the land, and England ruled the sea, Germany ruled the clouds was therefore profoundly true of the Germany of his day. It was the peculiar feature of the Germany which Napoleon overran that her greatest men were either indifferent, like Goethe, to the violent upheavals of the period, or else, like Beethoven, moved rather by the abstract ideas evolved in revolutionary France than by any German patriotism. The ideal of that Germany was art and culture, not patriotism. Its vital forces were turned to the production not of political efficiency or military leadership, but of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, and Goethe's *Faust*.' [1]

Fichte's teaching, then, marks the transition from the particularist individualism of eighteenth-century Germany to the centralized autocracy and the omnipotent State of the nineteenth. Philosophically startling as were the lectures of 1805, those of 1807 were, from the point of view of high political courage, even more remarkable. The famous *Addresses to the German Nation* were delivered on successive Sunday evenings from December 13, 1807, to March 20, 1808, in the hall of the Academy of Sciences. The circumstances were dramatic, not to say perilous for the lecturer. The French garrison was still in occupation of Berlin; French spies mingled with the great audience which hung upon the lecturer's lips; the king, the court,

[1] 'Germany and the Prussian Spirit,' ap. *Round Table*, September 1914, pp. 8, 9.

and the central government were exiled from the capital; the scholar alone confronted the French masters of his country. To Fichte's lectures, delivered at this critical juncture, it is hardly possible to attach too much importance. Seeley speaks of them as 'the prophetical or canonical book which announces and explains a great transition in modern Europe'.

What is the nature of the argument? The title is not without significance. The *Lectures* are addressed not to the Prussian people but to the *German nation*. Fichte then distinguishes between the *Nation* and the *State*; between the higher *patriotism* and the 'spirit of joint *civic* loyalty to the constitution and the laws'. 'What', he asks, is the spirit that 'can have an unquestionable right to demand of every one it meets, whether he himself consents or not, and if necessary to compel him, to put everything, life included, to hazard?' Not mere civic duty or loyalty, 'no, but the consuming flame of the higher patriotism which conceives the nation as the embodiment of the Eternal; to which the high-minded man devotes himself with joy, and the low-minded man . . . must be made to devote himself.' Nationality is something more than community of territory. 'The first original and truly natural frontiers of states are unquestionably their spiritual frontiers.' Each nation, therefore, worthy of the nume has its own distinctive quality or *ethos*. That *ethos* must be preserved with the utmost care. How can it be done? The answer of Fichte is the answer of Aristotle. 'Only by a system of national education.' To the subject of education, then, a large proportion of these lectures was devoted.

Education must be national; it must be provided at the expense of the State and, like military service, it must be compulsory. The method favoured by Fichte was, in the main, that which had been lately expounded by Pestalozzi. It must embrace both the culture of the intellect and also instruction in a practical craft; but above all it must be infused with the spirit of patriotism and must subserve—in the broadest sense—a political end. 'I hope', he said, 'to convince some Germans that nothing but education can rescue us from the miseries that overwhelm us.' How the teaching of Fichte bore fruit in the educational reforms of Humboldt will be seen later.

Stein's work.

But his influence was not confined to the sphere of education. It permeated the whole series of reforms with which the name of Stein is imperishably associated. Not that the whole credit belongs to Stein, or even to those of his colleagues named above. Seeley has shown that much of the inspiration came from the king himself. It was, however, necessity which drove. Prussia had either to undergo drastic reform or perish.

Finance.

Of the many questions which demanded Stein's attention the most urgent was that of finance. Prussia, always a poor country and now reduced in revenue and population by nearly a half, was called upon not only to pay a war indemnity amounting to 120,000,000 francs, but at the same time to maintain an army of occupation of 150,000 men. To meet the indemnity Stein raised a mortgage of 70,000,000 francs on the security of the royal domains, and got bills accepted by the merchants and bankers to the extent of another 50,000,000. In matters of taxation there was at that time no central

machinery. The several provinces were independent. But Stein induced East and West Prussia and Lithuania to accept an income tax, and a property tax was introduced into Silesia, Pomerania, and the Marches. A little later (November 1809) an important step was taken by the sale of the royal domains on which hitherto the State had largely depended for its revenue.

But the situation demanded something more than a reform of the finances.

The administrative machine needed to be overhauled from top to bottom; the whole economic basis of the state to be reformed; the social system itself to be fundamentally reconstructed.

The social and economic structure of Prussia was still entirely feudal. The mass of the people were serfs. A caste system, absolutely rigid in operation, divided class from class, and dominated land tenure. Agriculture consequently suffered. The landowner who lacked the capital wherewith to cultivate could not sell. The rich bourgeois could not buy.

The Emancipating Edict issued on October 9, 1807, was designed to eradicate these abuses. All personal servitude—the status of villainage—was abolished. 'From Martinmas 1810', so runs the edict, 'there shall be only free persons.' Land also was to be 'free'. Complete freedom of exchange was instituted. Hitherto the soil itself had been in the grip of the caste system. Noble land (*adelige Güter*) could be held only by nobles; civic land by citizens; peasant land by peasants. All distinctions in the soil were henceforward to be abolished. And all caste distinction of persons and occupations as

The Emancipating Edict.

well. Henceforward the noble might engage in trade, peasants and citizens might interchange their callings. Labour, instead of being localized, was rendered mobile. Artificial barriers between town and country were thrown down. Entails were cut off and all restrictions upon the alienation of land were abolished; but at the same time careful and ingenious precautions were taken lest this should lead to the expropriation of peasant owners.

The work begun by Stein was completed by Hardenberg. Stein made the peasant personally free: but he was still bound to pay fixed dues and quit-rents to the lord. By the agrarian law of 1811 Hardenberg abolished this dual ownership and converted peasant copyholders into proprietors. One-third of the peasant holding was surrendered to the lord in commutation for all charges, while the peasant retained the remaining two-thirds in undivided and unshackled proprietorship.

Not only to land did Stein apply the principle of 'freedom' which he had learnt from Turgot and Adam Smith. He abolished also the exclusive privileges of the trade guilds and various restrictive monopolies. With equal vigour he attacked governmental and administrative abuses.

Municipal Reform.

By the Municipal Act (1808) Stein carried through a large measure for the reform of local government. The towns were emancipated from the control either of the feudal lords or of the central government, and the administration of their affairs was entrusted to elected councils. This was a reform of large significance. 'The battle of Jena', writes Dahlmann,[1] 'had been but the

[1] Quoted ap. Seeley, ii. 228.

outward exhibition of the deep internal discord which went through all classes of the people. . . . The Baron vom Stein, by laying here the foundation of the salvation of Prussia, became in a deeper sense than King Henry, who could but build fortresses, the town builder of Germany.'

Had Stein not been interrupted there is no doubt that he would have extended similar principles to the rural communes, and that ultimately he would have crowned the edifice of administrative reform by the establishment of a regular parliamentary constitution. As it was he did much to introduce order into the central administration. The system of Frederick the Great, wholly dependent upon the will and energy of the personal ruler, had, as we have seen, completely broken down. It was now to be replaced by a council of state, consisting of heads of departments, acting in conjunction with each other and under the presidency of the sovereign, to whom they were to be personally responsible. The work of the departments, five in number, was carefully differentiated and organized. But, far-reaching as was the reforming activity of Stein, the work was only half done when, in December 1808, he was, at the bidding of Napoleon, dismissed. Napoleon's decisive interposition is, in one sense, the most striking testimony to the value of the work which Stein had accomplished. He had still much to do, but it was done in a different sphere. For three years he went into complete retirement. When he re-emerged it was as the unofficial counsellor of the Tzar Alexander. In that capacity his services to Germany were, as we shall see, not less remarkable than those which as first minister to Frederick William he had rendered to Prussia.

Administrative Reform.

Army reform.

Social, economic, and administrative reforms did not stand alone. Not less important was the task of military reorganization undertaken by Scharnhorst and Gneisenau. The old army system, based upon the principle of caste, had been completely discredited by the Jena campaign. But apart from that, reorganization would have been forced upon Prussia by Napoleon. In 1808 his fiat went forth that the army was to be reduced to 42,000 men. This was the reformer's opportunity. With a standing army so restricted in numbers every citizen must be trained to the use of arms. The active army was strictly limited to 42,000 men; but after a short period of service with the colours the citizen soldier was to pass into the reserve; a *Landwehr* was organized, though not until 1813, for home defence, and finally there was a *Landsturm*, or general arming of the population for guerilla warfare. Meanwhile, a number of reforms were introduced in the regular army: old and incompetent officers were cashiered; caste restrictions were abolished; a better system of promotion, based partly at least on merit, was adopted, and improvements were effected in drill, tactics, guns, and munitions.

Education.

Prussia has always regarded her army as part of her educational system. Of her indeed it may be said, as Aristotle said of Sparta, 'the system of education and the greater part of the laws are framed with a view to war'.[1] Nor can it be denied that it is this unity of principle which has given to the fabric of German organization its remarkable completeness and consistency. The first lesson instilled into the mind of the German

[1] *Politics*, vii. 2.

boy is that he has come into the world in order to take his part in the defence of the Fatherland. Army organization and education are therefore parts of one coherent whole. 'Side by side', writes Dr. M. E. Sadler, 'with the influences of German education are to be traced the influences of German military service. The two sets of influence interact on one another and intermingle. German education impregnates the German army with science. The German army predisposes German education to ideas of organization and discipline. Military and educational discipline go hand in hand.' [1]

This being so, it is an easy transition from Scharnhorst and Gneisenau to Fichte and Humboldt. The latter became head of the Department of Cultus and Public Instruction in April 1809. Prussia had adopted the principle of compulsion in elementary education as far back as 1716. But the method of instruction was radically unsound. Fichte's *Addresses*, however, gave an immense impulse to educational reform. An unofficial commission was sent to visit Pestalozzi's institution at Yverdun ; and, as a result, a normal school on Pestalozzian principles was opened at Königsberg under the direction of C. A. Zeller, himself an enthusiastic disciple of the Swiss reformer. From Königsberg the new method was diffused throughout the Prussian dominions, and Pestalozzian principles have dominated the elementary education of Germany from that day to this.

Humboldt was not content with reorganizing the

[1] *Board of Education Special Reports*, ix. p. 43 and *passim*. Cf. also Dr. Sadler on 'Education' ap. *Germany in the Nineteenth Century*. Manchester University Publications, No. XIII.

primary schools. Technical instruction, based always upon a sound general education, was encouraged; in the *Gymnasien* an admirable type of secondary education, mainly classical, was provided; leaving examinations were instituted to connect the higher secondary schools with the universities; and finally the edifice was crowned by the foundation of the University of Berlin. The Peace of Tilsit had deprived Prussia of its leading university—that of Halle. Of the universities which still remained to her—that of Königsberg was too remote, that of Frankfort-on-the-Oder was most inadequately endowed. It was decided therefore, in 1809, to found a new university in the capital, to assign as its head-quarters the palace of Prince Henry, with an annual subsidy of 150,000 thalers. Considering the position of Prussia at the time, the effort must be regarded as little short of heroic. Humboldt scoured Germany for eminent professors and gathered round him a remarkable band of scholars: Fichte taught philosophy; Schleiermacher theology; Savigny jurisprudence; Niebuhr history; and Wolf archaeology. A more eminent quintet never adorned a modern University. A year after the foundation of the University of Berlin that of Breslau was reorganized (1811), absorbing at the same time the more ancient but poverty-stricken University of Frankfort-on-the-Oder.

The new spirit did not manifest itself exclusively in educational institutions. In 1808 there was formed at Königsberg the Moral and Scientific Union or *Tugendbund*, the object of the Union being 'the revival of morality, religion, serious taste, and public spirit'. It quickly attracted to itself a large number of adherents, and branch

associations were formed in many towns of Prussia and Silesia. Connected in some manner with Freemasonry it was wholly patriotic in aim, though somewhat vague in operation. The *Tugendbund* was indeed only one more indication of the new temper aroused on the one hand by Napoleonic brutality, on the other by the work of Stein, Hardenberg, Scharnhorst, and their colleagues and coadjutors.

In this way and by such men was Prussia transformed. Politically, administratively, economically, militarily, and educationally a new Prussia came into being. Most of all: a new spirit was breathed into the Prussian people, a spirit which, though sometimes diverted and occasionally all but quenched, inspired immediately the great war of 1813–14, and led ultimately to the unification of Germany under Prussian hegemony in 1871.

The European conflict.

In the general current of European affairs Prussia is not, for the next year or two, intimately involved. Very briefly therefore may we glance at the progress of the European conflict between the Treaty of Tilsit (1807) and Napoleon's invasion of Russia (1812).

Those years revealed with ever increasing emphasis the fact that the real conflict lay between Napoleon and Great Britain. Tilsit was a conspiracy aimed primarily against the life of England. Canning, then at the Foreign Office, was quick to apprehend this truth, and frustrated the plot by the prompt seizure of the Danish fleet. This operation unfortunately involved the bombardment of Copenhagen, and it widened the breach between England and Denmark. But it was wholly effective and Napoleon foiled in the Baltic turned to the Tagus. Portugal was

the only continental Power which maintained a friendly neutrality with England. But after Tilsit Napoleon had determined that there should be no more neutrals in Europe. Portugal therefore was ordered to adhere to the *Continental System* and to declare commercial war upon England. As she hesitated to comply, Junot crossed the Bidassoa; the Portuguese royal family fled: a day later Junot entered Lisbon and declared 'that the House of Braganza had ceased to reign'. Thanks to the protection of the English fleet the chief representatives of that House were already on their way to Brazil.

The Peninsular War.

The attack on Portugal was the prelude to the Peninsular War. In 1808 Napoleon found himself embarked upon a contest with the Spanish people. Their Bourbon kings he had already pushed aside, and he deemed it a light task to install Joseph Bonaparte in their place. But in the Iberian Peninsula Napoleon was confronted by a new phenomenon. Hitherto he had been waging a contest with kings and statesmen who might or might not be representative of national feeling. In Spain he personally encountered for the first time a nation; somewhat loosely knit, but still a nation.

This encounter not only exercised an immense influence upon the immediate situation; it may be said, without exaggeration, to have opened a new chapter in the history of Europe.

Immediately, it led to the postponement of Napoleon's plans for the partition of Turkey and the annihilation of Prussia; it roused Austria to her courageous campaign in 1809; it strengthened and stimulated the national revival in Prussia; above all, it gave England the oppor-

tunity of playing an important part in the military struggle upon the Continent. That opportunity was equally welcomed by the government and by the people. 'We shall proceed,' said Canning, 'upon the principle that any nation of Europe which starts up with a determination to oppose a Power which, whether professing insidious peace or declaring open war, is the common enemy of all nations becomes instantly our ally.' Unofficial England was equally emphatic. 'Never before', said Sheridan, 'has so happy an opportunity existed for Great Britain to strike a bold stroke for the rescue of the world. Hitherto Buonaparte has run a victorious race because he has contended with princes without dignity, ministers without wisdom, or people without patriotism; he has yet to learn what it is to combat a people who are animated with one spirit against him. Now is the time to stand up boldly and fairly for the deliverance of Europe.'

For six years (1808–1814) England acted steadfastly upon the principles thus announced, and kept alight the flame of insurrection in the Peninsula.

Campaign of 1809.

The repercussion of events in Spain was felt immediately in Germany. The year 1809 was Austria's 'great year'. Ever since Austerlitz she had been waiting for the opportunity of revenge and steadily preparing to make it effective. The army organization was largely reformed by the Archduke Charles and Count Stadion, and on April 6, 1809, a stirring appeal was issued by the Emperor to his people. A week later war was declared. One great army under the Archduke Charles attacked Bavaria, but after a week's fighting was forced back by

Napoleon upon Vienna; a second under the Archduke Ferdinand advanced upon Warsaw; a third under the Archduke John raised the standard of revolt in the Tyrol and then marched into Italy. The Tyrolese peasants fought with superb gallantry, but the strategy of Napoleon was irresistible, and on May 13 he was once more in the Austrian capital. But his position there was far from safe; for the next two months it was indeed intensely critical. Had there been any real generalship among the Austrian archdukes Napoleon ought not to have escaped. As it was he suffered a very severe repulse, with the loss of 27,000 men, after two days' fighting at Aspern-Essling (May 21–2). The news of Aspern, by far the greatest reverse Napoleon had hitherto suffered, sent a thrill through Europe.

Risings in North Germany.

In Prussia, the news of the battle of Aspern was received with unbounded enthusiasm, and it is Seeley's opinion that if England had landed in North Germany in May the force which was subsequently wasted at Walcheren, it would have initiated a national rising in Germany. Be this as it may, the enthusiasm evoked by Aspern was permitted to evaporate in a series of spirited and courageous but isolated, unofficial, and unfruitful risings. In April there was a general rising, under a Prussian officer Baron von Dörnberg, in Hesse, where the rule of King Jerome was both hated and contemned. The rising was suppressed with great bloodshed, but Dörnberg himself managed to escape into Bohemia. An attempt to surprise the French garrison in Magdeburg was no more successful. In May Major von Schill led with great courage another forlorn hope. He beat off

a French force sent out from Magdeburg, captured a small fortress in Mecklenburg, made his way to the coast, in the hope of getting into touch with an English fleet, and actually succeeded in taking Stralsund (May 28). But three days later Schill's gallant little force was cut to pieces and the heroic commander himself was killed. A third rising was led by Duke Frederick William of Brunswick, who raised a force of volunteers in Bohemia, invaded Saxony, occupied Dresden, and compelled a force of Westphalians and Saxons commanded by King Jerome to retreat. Eventually he cut his way through to the mouth of the Weser, where he and his 'Black Legion'—more fortunate than Schill—embarked on English ships. Finally, when all was over, a large English army of 40,000 men, escorted by an adequate fleet, landed (July 30) on the island of Walcheren, with the object of capturing Antwerp. The idea, which was Lord Castlereagh's, was a brilliant one; the execution of it, committed to Lord Chatham and Sir Richard Strahan, was disastrously feeble. In September the expedition, decimated by disease and having effected nothing, was recalled to England.

Meanwhile, Napoleon, recovering from the reverse at Aspern, won a decisive victory at Wagram (July 5–6), and Austria accepted the armistice of Znaim (July 12). Three months later a Definitive Treaty was concluded at Vienna (October 10). The severity of the terms imposed upon Austria was due, in a large measure, to Wellington's failure to push on after Talavera and to the fiasco of Walcheren. By the Treaty of Vienna the Habsburg dominions were still further dismembered: Galicia was divided between Russia and the Grand

Duchy of Warsaw; Trieste, Croatia, Carniola, and the greater part of Carinthia (the 'Illyrian Provinces') were annexed to France; the Tyrol and the Vorarlberg, with Salzburg and a strip of Austria proper, to Bavaria. The Habsburgs lost 4,500,000 subjects; they had to pay an indemnity of £3,400,000; to reduce their army to 150,000 men; and to promise strict adherence to the continental system. They also gave an archduchess, Marie Louise, in marriage to Napoleon. Josephine was divorced at the end of 1809, and on April 1, 1810, the Emperor of the French was married to the niece of Marie Antoinette.

Rupture between Napoleon and Alexander

This Austrian marriage had a powerful effect upon the next development in the Napoleonic drama—the alienation of the Tzar Alexander. The bargain struck at Tilsit and confirmed at Erfurt, where for a fortnight in October, 1808, Napoleon held high festival in honour of his august ally and his dependent kings of the Rheinbund, had been imperfectly fulfilled. Finland was still in the hands of Sweden; the Danubian Principalities still formed part of the Ottoman Empire. Other things contributed to the growing uneasiness of the Tzar. The sheet-anchor of Napoleon's policy at this period was the continental blockade. That blockade caused considerable loss to England; it inflicted ruin upon neutrals and upon Napoleon's allies. In order to maintain it, Napoleon was forced to further annexations: the States of the Church were absorbed into the kingdom of Italy; Louis Napoleon's kingdom of Holland, Hamburg and other Hanseatic cities, the Duchy of Oldenburg, half Jerome's kingdom of Westphalia, part of the Grand Duchy of Berg, all were swept into the net of the French Empire in order

to keep the system intact. Alexander, deeply offended by the Austrian marriage, resentful of the annexation of his brother-in-law's Duchy of Oldenburg, suspicious of Napoleon's designs in Poland, found himself compelled to choose between ruinous adherence to the continental system and the forfeiture of the French alliance. After 1810, relations between the Tilsit conspirators became rapidly worse. 'I shall have war with Russia on grounds which lie beyond human possibilities, because they are rooted in the case itself.' So Napoleon himself had said to Metternich in 1810. In the next two years he did his best to isolate Russia; but with imperfect success. In 1812 Alexander protected his flanks by treaties with Turkey and Sweden. What line would Prussia take?

Prussian policy.

If Russia was menaced by the extension of the Napoleonic Empire in North Germany, still more was Prussia. But Prussia had not yet drunk the last dregs of the cup of humiliation. Early in 1810 Napoleon pressed for the immediate payment of the balance of the indemnity. 'If the King of Prussia does not pay he must cede Silesia to me.' It was in this extremity that the king recalled Hardenberg to office. Shortly after that stateman's recall the king and country suffered a terrible loss in the death of Queen Luise. Her beauty and kindliness had endeared her to the people, and her superb courage in adversity had been an example and an inspiration alike to the soldiers and the statesmen of Prussia. Hardenberg returned to office primarily in order to avert a further dismemberment of his country by the payment of the indemnity due to the ruthless conqueror, but his activities were many sided. His reform of land tenure has already

been described. To his financial schemes a word must be devoted. The immediate necessities were to be met by a forced loan secured upon the Royal Domains and the property of the churches. New stamp duties, an income tax, and a patent tax were imposed, and exemptions from the land tax were abolished. A commission was to be issued to regulate the debts incurred by the provinces and communes during the war. Representative assemblies, both central and local, were called into being.

But domestic reform, however important, could not have the first place in the mind of a Prussian statesman at a juncture so critical. The great conflict between France and Russia was obviously at hand. Even if neutrality had been possible to Prussia it would not have been permitted. On which side did her interests lie?

Prussia's dilemma.

The question was not easy to answer. To join Napoleon meant giving a free passage for the French troops; it meant a mortal affront to the Tzar, whose intercession had at least saved her in 1807 from complete annihilation, and exposure to his vengeance should Napoleon be defeated. To side with Russia would have called down upon Prussia instant and terrible vengeance at the hands of Napoleon. No more difficult problem has ever been presented to a responsible statesman. The dictates of honour were not obscure. But the risk involved in obedience might well give a patriot pause. All through the year 1811 the harassing negotiations proceeded. At last, on February 24, 1812, the die was cast, the treaty with France was signed. Prussia was to allow a free passage to the grand army; to provide 20,000 troops for offensive or defensive

operations and 20,000 more for garrison duty; to permit the French to requisition bread, meat, and forage, on terms to be subsequently determined; and to adhere strictly to the continental system. On his part Napoleon merely guaranteed the maintenance of the mutilated Prussian kingdom *in statu quo*. The conclusion of this treaty—a treaty which 'added the people of Frederick the Great to that inglorious crowd which fought at Napoleon's orders against whatever remained of independence and nationality in Europe'[1]—filled up the cup of Prussia's humiliation. The patriotic party were plunged into despair. Scharnhorst and Gneisenau resigned; some of the best officers took service in the Russian army; Stein, in exile, denounced the betrayal of the cause he had striven to serve.

Napoleon's left flank was thus secure; the right was protected by Austria. For Austria Napoleon had no such contempt as that with which, not undeservedly, he regarded Prussia. The terms imposed upon the Emperor were, therefore, far less humiliating. Austria merely undertook to provide 30,000 troops for defensive purposes under her own generals; in return she was to get Galicia.

The Moscow campaign.

The details of the Moscow campaign do not concern us. On June 24, 1812, Napoleon crossed the Niemen at the head of 680,000 men; by September 14 he was in Moscow; the retreat begun on October 19 rapidly became a rout; on December 5 Napoleon deserted his army and made all haste to Paris, and on December 13 100,000 men, a mere dishevelled and disorganized rabble, re-crossed the Niemen, and trudged wearily to Leipzig.

[1] Fyffe, op. cit., i. 454.

Its results. How did the Russian disaster affect the general situation, and in particular that of Prussia? Napoleon's position, though shaken, was not desperate. Austria, playing her own game with conspicuous skill, refused to join his enemies; the princes of the Rheinbund still adhered to their protector and president; France remained loyal to the emperor, and within three months had given him a new army; even the Tzar was undecided whether to seize Poland and so revenge himself on Prussia, or to put himself at the head of the Prussian patriots and lead a crusade for the liberation of Germany and of Europe. What was the attitude of Prussia?

The disaster which befell the tyrannical slave-driver reduced his slave to a condition of abject and pitiable indecision. Fortunately for the future of Prussia and of Germany, the decision at this fateful moment was taken out of the feeble hands of Frederick William III, and was confided to the sound judgement and indomitable will of Baron vom Stein and General Yorck.

Stein and Yorck. Stein had been for nearly four years in exile, but in the summer of 1812, when Napoleon's advance had actually begun, the Tzar invited Stein 'most pressingly' to come to Russia and give him the benefit of his counsel. Stein's prompt acceptance of that invitation was the turning-point in the history of modern Prussia and of modern Germany, for Stein it was who persuaded the Tzar to the fateful move which initiated the War of Liberation. But while Stein stimulated the Tzar, it was General Yorck who forced the hand of his own sovereign. Hans David Ludwig Count von Yorck was a rough Prussian soldier trained in the school of Frederick the

Great. He had distinguished himself in the Polish War of 1794, and again in that of 1806. In 1812 he was appointed to command the Prussian auxiliaries attached to Macdonald's army-corps, which, on the advance to Moscow, was left to occupy Courland. After Napoleon's retreat overtures were made to Yorck by the Russian commander in Riga. Holding a strong position, but uncertain as to the policy of his government, Yorck, on his own responsibility, resolved on a decisive step. On December 30, 1812, he concluded with the Tzar the Convention of Tauroggen. That convention stipulated for the temporary neutrality of Yorck's contingent, and that Russian forces should be allowed to occupy the territory between Memel and Königsberg. Frederick William, on learning of it, repudiated the convention and ordered the arrest of Yorck. The gallant soldier, undismayed, stuck to his post. 'With bleeding heart I burst the bond of obedience and wage war on my own account. The army wants war with France, the people wants it, the king himself wants it, but the king's will is not free. The army must make his will free. I will shortly be at Berlin with 50,000 men. There I will say to the king: Here, sire, is your army and here is my old head; I will willingly lay it at the king's feet, but Yorck refuses to be judged and condemned by a Murat.'

Frederick William made humble apology to France. He could do no otherwise. But luckily for Prussia his authority had passed to the statesman and the soldier. Stein and Yorck virtually assumed the reins of government. Stein summoned the estates of East Prussia to meet at Königsberg; he opened the Prussian harbours

and repudiated the continental system, and finally he organized the Landwehr and the Landsturm for a people's war against Napoleon.

The Prussian Estates assembled on February 5, 1813. Meanwhile the Russian army had crossed the Niemen (January 13); Frederick William fled from Berlin to Breslau, and on February 28 the Treaty of Kalisch was concluded. The alliance of Russia and Prussia was confirmed: Prussia was to surrender to the Tzar almost everything which she had acquired by the second and third partitions of Poland, while the Tzar undertook not to lay down arms until Prussia was restored, as regards area and population, to a position equivalent to that which she had held before Tilsit.

The War of Liberation.

On March 17 Frederick William declared war upon France. The War of Liberation had begun. In the history of that war two periods must be clearly distinguished. The first, waged on the principles of Yorck and Stein, lasts down to the armistice of Pläswitz (June 4); the second, dominated by the diplomacy of Metternich, begins with the adhesion of Austria (August 12) and extends down to the entry of the allies into Paris (March 31, 1814).

Since the beginning of the year Napoleon had bent all his energies to the raising and equipment of a new army. When he joined it at Erfurt (April 25) he found himself at the head of some 200,000 men. In the meantime the allies had been permitted to occupy Dresden; but on May 2 Napoleon attacked them at Lützen, drove them back across the Elbe, and himself reoccupied the Saxon capital (May 14). A week later (May 20, 21) the armies again engaged at Bautzen on the Spree. The

battle was obstinately contested, and not until the close of the second day were the allies compelled to retreat. They then fell back, in perfect order, upon Silesia. It was after Bautzen that Napoleon made the greatest blunder of his military career. He was anxious to strengthen his cavalry, to bring up the army of Italy to Laibach in order to intimidate Austria, and if possible to conclude a separate peace with the Tzar. On June 4, therefore, he offered a seven weeks' armistice. Eagerly accepted by the allies, it was known as the truce of Pläswitz. Here was the opportunity for Metternich's diplomacy. Nor was it neglected. Metternich's object was to restore the European equilibrium. He did not wish to exalt either Russia or Prussia unduly or to drive Napoleon from the French throne. Austria therefore offered her mediation to Napoleon, and by the Treaty of Reichenbach (June 27) she agreed to join forces with the allies if Napoleon should refuse the terms proposed by her. Those terms were very favourable to France. Napoleon was to be allowed to retain the French throne, the Rhine frontier, and the Presidency of the Rhine-Confederation; but was to restore the Illyrian provinces to Austria, and to Prussia and the North German states the territory of which they had been deprived in 1807 and 1810 respectively. Napoleon neglected to accept the terms before the specified day; the armistice was allowed to lapse; Austria declared war (August 12), and the second period of the War of Liberation began.

Napoleon was now in command of about 700,000 men. To these the allies could oppose about 500,000, with an additional 350,000 of reserves. 250,000, mainly Austrians, Aug. 12 1813–March 31, 1814.

were in Bohemia under Prince Karl von Schwarzenberg, who had also the equivocal advantage of the presence at his head-quarters of the allied sovereigns. Blücher had 100,000 Prussians and Russians under his command in Silesia; a third army, consisting of Russians, Prussians, and Swedes, in all about 120,000 strong, was in Brandenburg under the command of Bernadotte, Crown Prince of Sweden. Before the end of the year the Prussians, by a superb effort, had brought their total contingent up to 300,000 men. Napoleon planned a triple attack. In Silesia, the French were badly beaten. On August 27 Blücher won a great victory over Macdonald on the Katzbach, and after various minor engagements the French were expelled from Silesia. In Brandenburg, Bülow, despite the apathy or something worse of Bernadotte, repulsed Oudinot's advance upon Berlin, drove the French back across the Elbe (August 21), and on September 6 routed the army of Ney at Dennewitz. There remained Schwarzenberg's army in Bohemia. With a little more energy Dresden might easily have been taken, but Schwarzenberg's procrastination gave Napoleon time to get back for its defence, and on August 26–7 he inflicted a severe defeat upon the Austrians. It was his last victory on German soil. The allied armies gradually concentrated upon the plain of Leipzig, and there the final issue was joined. The battle was on a gigantic scale; nearly 500,000 men were engaged; and fighting lasted four whole days (October 16–19). But by the end of it the might of Napoleon was broken. The victory cost the allies 54,000 men in killed and wounded. Napoleon lost 40,000, 260 guns, and 30,000 prisoners.

From Leipzig Napoleon made his way with the remnant of his shattered army towards the Rhine. If the allied armies had been under a single and a capable commander, he would never have reached it. A Bavarian army checked his progress near Hanau (October 29–31), but Napoleon pushed it aside, and on November 2 he crossed the Rhine, with 90,000 men, at Mainz.

The Napoleonic Empire in Germany fell to the ground with a crash. The vassal princes of the Rhenish Confederation hastened, with the exception of the King of Saxony, to come to terms with the allies. The Treaty of Töplitz (September) guaranteed their continued independence. In the Treaty of Ried (October) the King of Bavaria obtained a pledge that his sovereign rights should be undiminished, and that he should retain all the territory acquired through Napoleon, except the Tyrol and the Austrian districts on the Inn. King Jerome fled from Westphalia, and the dispossessed princes, including the Dutch Stadtholder, William of Orange, were restored to their thrones.

The Allies in France.

If Blücher could have had his way, Napoleon's broken army would have been immediately pursued across the Rhine. The Tzar Alexander was in accord with him, and England, not uninfluenced by the fact that Wellington had crossed the Pyrenees and was now firmly established on French soil, threw her influence into the same scale. But Frederick William, with ingrained timidity, held back; Bernadotte had no wish to see his native land despoiled by the foreigner; while Austria was anxious to balance Napoleonic France against Russia. At Frankfort, therefore, the allies decided to offer terms to Napoleon. They

were conceived in a most generous spirit. France was to resign her conquests in Italy, Spain, trans-Rhenane Germany, and to withdraw within her 'natural frontiers' —the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees. Belgium, Savoy, and the German provinces west of the Rhine would, under this arrangement, have been retained. It is almost incredible that, after Leipzig, Napoleon could have made peace on terms that would have amazed and delighted Louis XIV. It is even more incredible that he should have hesitated to accept them. On December 1 the offer was withdrawn, and before the end of the year the allies, 400,000 strong, were in France. Never was Napoleon's strategy more brilliant than in the campaign by which, for nine weeks, the enemy's advance on Paris was delayed. Twice during that period he might have had peace on terms which would have given France the frontiers of 1791 and left Napoleon in possession of its throne. Almost continuously through February there were negotiations at Châtillon, where Napoleon tried to drive a diplomatic wedge into the alliance. His efforts were foiled mainly by Castlereagh, who on March 1 brought about the Treaty of Chaumont. The four Powers pledged themselves against separate negotiations, signed an alliance for twenty years, and agreed to supply 150,000 men apiece. Meanwhile, all through the winter the Silesian army under Blücher had been doing splendid work. On February 1 Blücher won a decisive victory at La Rothière, and though badly defeated a fortnight later near Montmirail, he again turned the tables on Napoleon at Laon (March 9). The pursuit of Napoleon was temporarily stayed by the illness of Blücher, but nothing

could now resist the advance of the allies, and after some desultory fighting in the suburbs Paris itself surrendered (March 30). On the 31st the allies made a triumphal entry into the capital of France.

Napoleon was deposed, by his own Senate, and sent into exile at Elba with a large pension; Louis XVIII was recalled, and on May 30 the first Treaty of Paris was signed. With its terms, which were extraordinarily lenient to France, this narrative is not concerned. The questions affecting the future of Germany were referred to a Congress which was to meet in the autumn at Vienna.

For further reference:

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CHAPTER VIII

THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA

The Settlement of 1815

The Congress of Vienna.

The Congress of Vienna forms one of the great landmarks in European history. The range of its diplomatic activities may be gauged from the fact that between May 1814 and November 1815 no fewer than forty-nine separate engagements were concluded.[1] We must, however, confine our attention to that section of its labours which had a direct bearing upon the evolution of Prussia.

With the significant exception of Turkey every European State was represented at the Congress. The Emperor of Austria, the Tzar of Russia, and the Kings of Prussia, Bavaria, and Würtemberg were there in person. The Tzar brought with him a cohort of counsellors drawn, after the Muscovite mode, from many lands: Stein, Nesselrode, Capo d'Istria, Czartoryski, and Pozzo di Borgo. Prussia was represented by Hardenberg and William von Humboldt, England by Castlereagh, and Austria by Metternich. Talleyrand also, though not yet formally admitted to the Congress, was in Vienna in order to watch the interests of France, and he watched them, as will be

[1] The texts of these treaties fill over 400 closely printed pages in the large octavo edition of Hertslet's *Map of Europe by Treaty*.

seen, with unsleeping vigilance and consummate adroitness.

Of the many problems to be solved those which most closely concern us were: the future of Poland, the fate of Saxony, the rebuilding of Prussia, and the provision of a new constitution for Germany. The question of Alsace and Lorraine, though not less important to Germany, was decided in Paris.

Poland.

Two men, perhaps only two, came to Vienna with a perfectly clear and definite object. One of them was the Tzar Alexander; the other was Talleyrand. The Tzar was determined to make reparation for the crime of Catherine and Frederick by reuniting and restoring the kingdom of Poland. But the crime was to be expiated wholly at the expense of Catherine's accomplices. Austria was to lose Galicia; Prussia was to surrender South Prussia and new East Prussia, and the Tzar himself was to become the first king of a regenerated Poland. The odd thing is that the Tzar's grandiloquent homage to the ideas of unity, liberty, and nationality was taken so gravely by his colleagues. Alexander was a curious mixture of lofty mysticism, generous enthusiasm, and calculating shrewdness. His idealism prompted the regeneration of Poland; his ambition whispered that this was the appropriate moment for the realization of Russia's dream. Yet he was no hypocrite; and he was the master of many battalions. 'Avec 600,000 hommes,' as a colleague remarked, 'on ne négocie pas beaucoup.' Accordingly the grand duchy of Warsaw, now reconstituted as the 'Congress' kingdom of Poland, went to the Tzar, who, in addition, acquired Finland from the Swedes.

Prussian Poland.

The town of Cracow, with the surrounding district, was declared to be a 'Free Independent and strictly neutral city, under the protection of Austria, Russia, and Prussia'. Austria regained part of Galicia. Prussia regained the great fortresses of Danzig and Thorn, together with the province of Posen lying between the Oder and the Vistula, and connecting Silesia with East Prussia.

The Final Act of the Treaty of Vienna provided that the 'Poles who are respective subjects of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, shall obtain a Representation and National Institutions regulated according to the degree of political consideration that each of the Governments to which they belong shall judge expedient and proper to grant them'. To this engagement Frederick William adhered, and, in 1815, he issued a rescript to his Polish subjects, promising to respect their Church, their language, and their nationality, to establish a constitution and to employ Poles, as far as possible, in public offices. The sequel will show how far these promises were kept.

The Saxon question.

Danzig, Thorn, and Posen could not, however, be regarded as fulfilling the promises of the Treaty of Kalisch,[1] particularly when it is remembered that Prussia gave up Anspach and Baireuth to Bavaria, and to Hanover Hildesheim and East Friesland, besides portions of Lingen and Eichsfeld. Where was Prussia to get her compensation? Saxony was the destined victim. Her king, having adhered to Napoleon to the bitter end, had no claim to consideration at the hands of the allies. Saxony was saved, however, or partially saved by the consummate adroitness of Talleyrand, who found in the

[1] See *supra*, p. 250.

Saxon question the desired seed for sowing discord among the allies. That discord very nearly led to a renewal of war between Prussia and Russia on the one side and, on the other, England, Austria, and France. War, however, was averted, and Prussia had to content herself with the northern and smaller half of Saxony, containing 800,000 inhabitants. The compensation was still inadequate, even when Lower Pomerania (Neu-Vorpommern) was thrown in. It was ultimately found in western Germany.

Westphalia and the Rhineland.

Of Prussia's acquisitions in 1815 by far the most important was the great province on both sides of the Rhine, including Westphalia, Cleves, Köln, Aachen, Bonn, Coblenz, and Trier. The significance of this addition to the Hohenzollern dominions was not merely geographical, but economic, ecclesiastical, and cultural. Geographically it brought Prussia into immediate contact with France; it made her the guardian of the middle Rhine, and thus, in a sense, the protector of western Germany. True, the Rhine province was isolated, cut off from Prussia by the intervening territories of Hesse and Hanover. But this fact served to justify the annexations of 1866. The inhabitants of these lands were mainly Catholics, and culturally quite distinct from Prussians and Brandenburgers. The Rhineland had for twenty years been an integral part of France; it had imbibed the doctrines of the Revolution and had known the value of Napoleonic organization. All this it brought to Prussia; and not this only, for, with Westphalia, it brought her a wonderful accession of industrial and economic resources, as the mere mention of Essen, Elberfeld, Düsseldorf, and Duisburg eloquently recalls.

Austria.

The full significance of these changes cannot be appreciated unless we bear in mind the changes simultaneously effected in the position of the Austrian empire. The Habsburgs, from their own point of view, were not less fortunate than the Hohenzollern. They lost the Austrian Netherlands, which they had always regarded as a tiresome encumbrance, but acquired or recovered Eastern Galicia, Salzburg, the Tyrol, the Vorarlberg, the Illyrian provinces, Venetia, and Lombardy. The ethnical factor in these changes should not be ignored. The Habsburgs lost Flemings and gained Italians. The Hohenzollern exchanged Slavs for Germans.

Two other questions remain to be considered: that of Alsace-Lorraine, and the future constitution of Germany as a whole. Neither was easy of solution. Both were German rather than Prussian problems, but in both Prussia had a special though proleptic interest.

Alsace-Lorraine.

The three great bishoprics of Lorraine passed to France in 1553, and the cession was confirmed by the Treaty of Westphalia (1648). By the latter treaty the Empire also ceded to France its rights over Alsace, though with certain obscure reservations. One of these obscurities was cleared up when in 1681 Strasburg was annexed, under the mockery of judicial forms, by Louis XIV. The remaining portions of the Duchy of Lorraine were promised to France by the Treaty of Vienna (1735) and actually passed to her in 1766. On the strength of these historical facts Germans have been tempted—not unnaturally—to argue that Alsace-Lorraine having been originally German had been by force and fraud annexed to France. It seemed to them, in 1815, that the

opportunity had come for their recovery. Nor could it be denied that France had made use of those provinces as 'a back door into Germany', for the purpose of accentuating particularist tendencies and thus keeping Germany divided and impotent.

Hardenberg, in particular, insisted that the opportunity for a 'restoration' ought not to be neglected.

The argument could not be lightly brushed aside: that it did not prevail was due to the rough, straightforward, and eminently practical reasoning of the Duke of Wellington. With him it was no question of historical tradition, or of linguistic or ethnological affinities. He asked two blunt questions: (i) What have you been fighting against? (ii) What have you been fighting for? His answers were equally direct: You have been fighting not against France, but against the armed doctrine of revolution. You have been fighting to secure the peace of Europe. That peace depends upon the restoration of a settled government in France under a legitimate dynasty. But even legitimacy will not, in the eyes of Frenchmen, atone for dismemberment. Deprive France of Alsace-Lorraine and within a few years Europe will be again at war. The duke prevailed as much perhaps by the force of personality as by that of argument; Hardenberg went away empty, and for another half-century Alsace-Lorraine remained in the keeping of France.

The Hundred Days

Before this settlement was reached the diplomatic game at Vienna had been rudely interrupted by the renewal of war. On March 6 the news reached Vienna that Napoleon, tiring of exile, had escaped from Elba (February 26). On March 1 he landed near Antibes,

made his way to Grenoble, and thence to Lyons, and on March 20 entered Paris.

The allies promptly confirmed the Treaty of Chaumont, refused to receive the envoys of Napoleon and declared him an outlaw, and made immediate preparation for a renewal of the war. France was to be invaded from three points: the English and Prussians, under the command of Wellington and Blücher, were to advance through the Netherlands; the Russians and Austrians by the middle and upper Rhine respectively.

The Waterloo Campaign.

For three months Napoleon laboured incessantly to raise a new army, and on June 14 he appeared at the head of 125,000 men on the western bank of the Sambre. Opposed to him were Wellington and Blücher. Wellington was at Brussels in command of a mixed force of English, Dutch, and Germans, 105,000 strong. His front extended from Ghent to Mons. Blücher, with head-quarters at Namur, had under his command a force mainly composed of Prussians, but partly of levies from the new Rhine provinces, amounting in all to 117,000 men. The Prussian line extended from Liège to Charleroi. Napoleon's plan was to throw himself upon the centre of the thin line opposed to him, to drive in a wedge between the allied armies and then defeat them in detail. He crossed the Belgian frontier on the 15th, attacked the extreme right of the Prussian forces on the same day, and by nightfall was in possession of Charleroi and the bridges over the Sambre. Blücher hurried to the support of his right and took up his position at Ligny. A portion of Wellington's force was astride the Brussels road at Quatre-Bras. On the 16th, Ney was dispatched with

orders to clear the British force out of Quatre-Bras, and that done, to attack Blücher's right flank at Ligny. Meanwhile, Napoleon himself was to march on Ligny. At Quatre-Bras Ney found that he had more than enough to do. So far from clearing out the British he was himself pushed back with heavy loss. Not a man could he spare for the attack on Ligny. But neither, on the other hand, could Wellington go to the support of Blücher.

Blücher.

Wellington's failure to do so is the foundation of the legend which still does duty in Prussia for a history of the Waterloo campaign. Early on the 16th Wellington had ridden over to confer with Blücher, and had promised, *if not attacked himself*, to go to the assistance of the Prussians. For the assertion that but for Wellington's promise Blücher would not have fought at Ligny there is no warrant. Blücher knew Wellington's promise to be conditional, and the condition was not fulfilled. Meanwhile, Napoleon's attack upon Blücher, though obstinately resisted, was successful, and Blücher was forced to retire.

His strategy in this retirement was the real turning-point of the campaign. After the battle of Ligny Napoleon unaccountably lost touch of his enemy. Imagining that Blücher would retire upon Liège, he dispatched Grouchy with 30,000 men in pursuit of him. Grouchy never found him, for Blücher, as loyal as he was brave and skilful, retired, not eastwards upon Liège, but, in order that he might keep in touch with Wellington, northwards on Wavre. On the 17th Napoleon dallied, but moving slowly along the Brussels road he found on the 18th that his advance was blocked by Wellington at Waterloo.

Waterloo. For five hours Wellington, on that fateful field, sustained the French attack; and sustained it alone. His tactics were based on the assumption that the Prussians would come to his assistance. They came; but not until six o'clock was their help effective. By that time the great battle was practically won. The Prussian cavalry, however, did an enormous though secondary service to the cause of the allies. They converted a defeat into a complete rout. The figures tell their own tale: the Prussians lost 6,000 men; Wellington lost 13,000; Napoleon lost 30,000 and all his guns. The war was over. The decisive factors in the final struggle were two: Blücher's strategical retreat upon Wavre, and Wellington's tactics at Waterloo. Waterloo opened the road to Paris: on the 7th of July the allies re-entered the French capital.

Napoleon executed a formal abdication in favour of the King of Rome on June 22, surrendered to Admiral Hotham at Rochefort on July 15, and was deported to St. Helena, where, in 1821, he died.

Second Treaty of Paris, Nov. 20. Two days after the re-entry of the allies Louis XVIII returned to his capital, and after four months of negotiations the Second Treaty of Paris was concluded (November 20). France was, as we have seen, permitted to retain Alsace-Lorraine, but was deprived of most of Savoy and the other territorial gains of 1814, including the fortresses of Philippeville, Marienburg, Saarlouis, and Landau; her northern and eastern frontier, with eighteen fortresses, was to be occupied for five years by an allied army of 150,000 men; she was to pay an indemnity of 700,000,000 francs and to disgorge the art

treasures and trophies stolen from the allies, and (with the exception of the Prussian trophies) not restored in 1814. On the same day the four great Powers solemnly confirmed the treaty which they had signed at Chaumont (March 10, 1814) and renewed at Vienna (March 25, 1815). Certain extensions had been rendered necessary by intervening events, but, in its amended form, the treaty formed the basis of the 'Concert' which for the next four years was to control the destinies of Europe. Two months earlier (September 14) the Tzar Alexander had induced his brother sovereigns of Austria and Prussia to append their signatures to the famous document announced to the world as *The Holy Alliance*. The significance alike of the Holy Alliance and the Quadruple Treaty of November 20 was prospective and will demand attention later on.

Final act of Vienna Congress.

Meanwhile, undisturbed by the reappearance of Napoleon or by the renewal of the war, the diplomatists had pursued and concluded their task at Vienna. The German Federal Act was signed on June 8, and on the following day, just a week before the battles of Ligny and Quatre-Bras, the protracted labours of the Congress were brought to a conclusion by the formal adoption of the 'Final Act'.

The work of the Congress has been subjected to the severest criticism. The diplomatists are commonly accused of having been obscurantist in temper and wholly reactionary in aims; of having been blind to the new and potent forces liberated by the French Revolution; of having subordinated the interests of the peoples to those of the princes; of having ignored the principle of

nationality and defied that of liberty; of having tossed Norway to Sweden, Venice to Austria, Genoa to Sardinia; of having put Poland under the heel of Russia, and Belgium under that of Holland. Such criticisms are easy to make and difficult to rebut. The diplomatists, it must be admitted, had no easy task. They had to reconstruct the shattered states-system of Europe; but they had to rebuild on the old site, with such materials as the science and skill of their own day could supply, and their hands were tied by a multitude of engagements very recently concluded.[1] That the structure should not have commended itself to the more critical and enlightened taste of a later generation is intelligible. How far it deserved these strictures the following chapters will show. One fact is indisputable. The Congress of Vienna marks a stage of transcendent significance in the fortunes of the Hohenzollern and in the evolution of Prussia.

The German settlement.

The primary task assigned to the Congress of Vienna was to remake the German State. For the last eight years Germany had been without a head and without a constitution. States there were *in* Germany, but there was no German State. The first Treaty of Paris (§ 6) had provided that 'The States of Germany shall be independent and shall be united in a federal league'. One of the first duties of the Congress of Vienna was, therefore, to give substance to the general declaration of the Treaty of Paris. For this purpose a committee was appointed consisting of the plenipotentiaries of Austria, Prussia, Hanover, Bavaria, and Würtemberg. Stein would

[1] Cf. *supra*, pp. 253 seq.

have excluded the two latter states, which had belonged to the Rheinbund; but he was overruled.

Between October 14 and November 16 the committee held no less than thirteen meetings; but no agreement was reached. What were the main obstacles in the way of a settlement? With the difficulties encountered in the readjustment of territory we have already dealt. There remained the infinitely more serious problem of a constitution for Germany. The possible alternatives were six: (i) the revival of some form of empire under the hegemony of Austria; or (ii) of Prussia; (iii) some loose form of confederation (Staatenbund); (iv) a genuine federal state (Bundesstaat); (v) two federal states, under Prussia and Austria respectively; and (vi) the complete independence of the territorial princes and free cities. Even apart from the specific provision of the Treaty of Paris, the last alternative was not to be thought of. Some form of union, however elastic, was essential if Germany was to take any place in the European States-system. But to the realization of effective unity the difficulties seemed almost insuperable. The first and greatest was presented by the position of the two great Powers—Austria and Prussia. Neither was racially or politically homogeneous; both contained provinces which had formed no part of the old Empire; between them there was a jealousy and rivalry which was fast hardening into a tradition. Hardly less serious was the problem presented by the position of the secondary states. In the latter, both princes and people had formed the habit of looking to France. Irksome as the Rheinbund may have been as regards foreign policy and military service,

Obstacles.

it impinged hardly at all upon the absolute sovereignty of the confederate princes over their own subjects. Not one tittle of that sovereignty were the princes of Bavaria, Würtemberg, Saxony, Hesse, Baden, and the rest prepared to surrender. If Austria and Prussia were jealous of each other, the smaller states were jealous of both.

There was yet another obstacle in the path of German unity. Europe as a whole was to be a party to the settlement. But none of the great Powers had either intimate understanding of German domestic politics or much sympathy with the aspirations of German patriots. Neither Russia nor France desired that the ideas of 1813 and 1814 should materialize into an efficient and unified German state. France in particular regarded the surrender of the Rhine frontier as a distasteful but temporary necessity, in which she would acquiesce only so long as she must. The consolidation of Germany, the evolution of a state capable of attracting to itself the loyalty of the semi-Gallicized population of the western provinces, was eminently calculated to interpose a formidable, perhaps an insurmountable, barrier between France and the realization of a cherished ambition.

Stein's views.

Of all the statesmen at Vienna there was none who looked to the future of Germany with such intense anxiety as the man who, in 1807, had remade Prussia, who in 1813 had saved Frederick William from himself, and had contributed so effectually to the liberation of Germany from the yoke of Napoleon. Stein was not a member of the Constituent Committee, but he made no secret of his views. 'It is', he wrote to the Tzar (November 5, 1814), 'consonant with the principles of

justice and liberty entertained by the allies that Germany should enjoy political and civil liberty, that the sovereignty of the rulers should be limited, that the abuses of power should cease, that an ancient nobility illustrious by reason of its services in the field, its pre-eminence in Church and State, should no longer be bound hand and foot by the caprices of autocrats, led by a greedy Jacobin bureaucracy . . . that the rights of all should be determined and guaranteed, and that Germany should no longer consist of one vast congeries of oppressors and oppressed.'

Here Stein writes as the enlightened domestic reformer, anxious to secure a modicum of constitutional and personal liberty for the subjects of the several states. He was not less concerned as to the mutual relations of these states: as to the realization of German nationality, and the attainment of German unity. But he perceived that it would be necessary to proceed slowly and cautiously. Accordingly, as a first step, he favoured the separation of North Germany from South and the formation of two strong federal states under Prussia and Austria respectively.[1]

Austrian views.

To this division the Austrian emperor and Metternich were inflexibly opposed. The idea of a revival of a single empire in any shape or a resumption of the crown of Germany by Austria was equally repugnant to them. Metternich hoped to revive Habsburg influence in Germany by other means. Austria might become a sort of residuary legatee of the Napoleonic Empire in Germany; attach to herself the loyalty of the minor sovereigns who

[1] Cf. Seeley, op. cit., iii. 169 seq.

had looked to Napoleon; flatter their complacency; secure them in their absolutist rights against their own subjects, and so frustrate the designs of the Prussianizing party. Assuming, as was indeed the case, that Austria was devoid of 'German' patriotism, that she was looking to her own dynastic position, the idea was indisputably ingenious. With this end in view Metternich worked incessantly to reduce the unitarian element in the revised constitution to a minimum, and to form a loose confederation of independent and coequal sovereigns.[1]

In this endeavour Metternich had powerful allies: the particularist and absolutist ambitions of the minor princes, and the existence of treaties recently concluded. The Treaty of Töplitz (September 9, 1813) had, as we have seen, guaranteed complete independence to the states adhering to the Rheinbund; that of Ried (October 8) specifically guaranteed this privilege to Bavaria, and that of Fulda (November 3) gave a similar assurance to Würtemberg.

The essential difficulties of the problem are clearly illustrated by the first draft of a Constitution agreed upon by Metternich and Hardenberg as a basis for the consideration of the Constituent Committee. This scheme provided for a German Confederation from which a great part of the Habsburg and Hohenzollern dominions were excluded. Austria was to come in only for Salzburg, Tyrol, Vorarlberg, Berchtesgaden, and the upper Rhine: Prussia for her territories west of the Elbe. The confederate territory was to be divided into circles, each

[1] Cf. Sybel, *Die Begründung des Deutschen Reichs* (Eng. tr.), i. 415.

under a governor who was to be the most considerable prince of the district. There was to be a Diet of three chambers at Frankfort: (i) a Directory, consisting of the Emperor of Austria (President) and the King of Prussia (Director); (ii) the Governors of Circles; (iii) the Princes and Estates. Finally, certain fundamental rights, such as personal liberty, were to be guaranteed to all subjects.

Several of the features of this draft reappear, as we shall see, in the scheme ultimately adopted. To Stein it was particularly repugnant, and in default of obtaining a really effective federation—a Bundesstaat—he fell back upon the idea of a revival of the old Empire. It was the counsel of despair. Neither Austria nor Prussia would seriously consider it, and after further deliberation the weak compromise for which Metternich had all along been fighting was finally adopted. The Federal Act was signed and sealed on June 8, 1815, just in time to be embodied in the Final Act of the Congress which was executed on June 9.[1] The Germanic Constitution was thus formally placed under the guarantee of the signatory Powers.

The Germanic Confederation was to comprise thirty-nine[2] Sovereign States and Free Cities (Lübeck, Bremen, Frankfort, and Hamburg). The most powerful members of the Bund were largely non-Germanic. Austria and Prussia adhered to it only for those portions of their territories (including Silesia) which had formed part of

The Germanic *Bund*.

[1] For full text cf. Hertslet, *Map of Europe by Treaty*, i, No. 27.

[2] Only thirty-eight appear in the Federal Act. Hesse-Homburg was included in September.

the old Empire. England came in for the kingdom of Hanover; Denmark for the duchy of Holstein; the King of the Netherlands for Limburg and Luxemburg. The object of the Bund was defined as the 'maintenance of the internal and external security of Germany and of the independence and inviolability of each of the German States'. All the confederates undertook to 'defend the whole of Germany as well as each individual state of the confederation against every attack and mutually to guarantee all the possessions of each member'. They engaged 'neither to make war upon each other, nor to enforce their claims with violence, but to bring them before the federal Diet and submit them to the decision of a commission or of an impartial court of reference'. The members reserved to themselves the right of making alliances, provided they did not endanger the safety of the Bund or any single state; but they agreed that, in a war of the confederation, there should be no partial negotiation, truce, or peace. All the members were to have equal rights and all bound themselves equally to keep the act of confederation inviolable.

The concerns of the Bund were to be managed by a Federal Diet at Frankfort in which Austria was to preside. The procedure of the Diet was to be of two kinds: (i) by means of an inner council (*Engerer Rath*); and (ii) the *Plenum*. In the former there were to be seventeen voices: one each being assigned to Austria, Prussia, Hanover, Bavaria, Saxony, Würtemberg, Baden, Electoral Hesse (Hesse-Cassel), Grand Ducal Hesse (Hesse-Darmstadt), Holstein, and Luxemburg. The remaining twenty-eight states were grouped into six *curiae*, to each

of which one vote was assigned, the four free cities forming a single curia. In the Engerer Rath decisions were to be by a simple majority, proxies being allowed for absentees. In the *Plenum* there were to be sixty-nine voices, assigned roughly according to population, a two-thirds majority being required for decisions. The adoption or revision of fundamental laws, the *iura singulorum*, or affairs of religion required a unanimous vote. The powers of the Diet were, in theory, very extensive. It had power to declare war and peace, to maintain a federal army, to send and receive diplomatic representatives,[1] to conclude treaties with foreign Powers, to decide inter-state disputes, and to regulate their commercial relations. But it had no administrative officers under its control, and could enforce its orders only by the cumbrous process of a 'federal executive'. Finally, the Federal Act ordained that in every confederate state a representative constitution was to be adopted.

The Germanic Bund.

Regarded as an organic constitution the Bund of 1815 possessed almost every imaginable fault. As a provision against external dangers it was wellnigh impotent. Nor was it more satisfactory as a frame of domestic government. The legislature consisted of the plenipotentiaries of sovereign states, voting in accordance with the instructions of their respective governments, and requiring for important decisions an unattainable unanimity. There was no real executive, and the judicial authority was devoid of sanction. On the other hand, the Bund was a facile instrument for the purposes of

[1] Foreign ambassadors were regularly accredited to Frankfort, but the Bund, as such, never had permanent missions at foreign courts.

reaction and obstruction. It was 'strong for the maintenance of what its numerous sovereigns called internal order'.[1] If one of the smaller sovereigns desired to moderate the ardour of his reforming subjects, or if one of the greater Powers was anxious to restrain the liberal tendencies of a colleague, what readier or more effective means could have been devised than an appeal to the federal Diet?

The whole arrangement was, in fact, a triumph for the principles of Metternich. It contained enough of the semblance of unity to enable him to utilize the position of Austria, as president of the confederation, in order to obstruct constitutional reform in the smaller states. It did not possess enough of the substance of unity to give Prussia or the smaller states any real control over Austria. But the characteristic of the Bund which above every other commended itself to Metternich was a negative one. It contained no trace of any concession to the 'Jacobinism' of Stein; it was well calculated to stifle the hopes, whether of liberalism or of nationalism, which had been evoked by the war of liberation.

Nature of the settlement.

Such was the settlement of 1815. Alike from the point of view of the particularist liberal or from that of the Pan-German nationalist it was arid and unsatisfactory for the present, and unpromising for the future. In one sense, indeed, it might appear positively reactionary. The old Empire had been for many years little more than an archaeological survival: but it had at least been a symbol of Germanic unity. And symbols are not to be despised even in *Realpolitik*. In its place there had come into

[1] Malet, *Overthrow of the Germanic Confederation*, p. 2.

being a Bund, quite as ineffective for good as the old Empire and much more potent for mischief; useless as a rallying point for the common interests and aspirations of the German folk, but most effective, in the hands of reactionary rulers, as an instrument of tyranny and an engine of repression.

The outlook, then, for Germany as a whole was gloomy. Nor was it relieved by the attitude of the individual princes. Of German interests they were wholly careless. Prussia was more anxious about the Vistula than about the Rhine; Austria cared little about Alsace or Lorraine, still less about Belgium; but everything about Dalmatia, Venice, and Lombardy; about the fortunes of her cadets on the petty thrones of the Italian duchies. The views of the minor princes were, with one or two exceptions, equally self-seeking and contracted. 'Leave us', was their cry, 'in possession of the absolute sovereign rights which we enjoyed as members of the Rheinbund. Of these rights we will surrender nothing, either in deference to the claims of German unity or as a concession to the liberties of our own subjects.'

Thus the situation must have looked to contemporaries. Yet beneath the surface there were elements of hope. Napoleon had done more for Germany than he intended; much more than the Germans of that day could appreciate. The mere reduction of sovereignties from three hundred to thirty-nine was clear gain. The annihilation of the petty principalities by the mediatization of 1803, the concentration of authority and the consolidation of states, unquestionably made for better government and for the greater happiness of the mass of the German peoples.

It meant more than this. It proved to be a necessary stage in the process by which, in the nineteenth century, Germany was transformed from a congeries of unimportant principalities under the presidency of Austria into a great federal state under the hegemony of Prussia.

For further reference:

SOREL: *Le Traité de Paris*; SEELEY: *The Life and Times of Stein*; HERTSLET: *Map of Europe by Treaty* (invaluable for this and subsequent *texts*); DEBIDOUR: *Histoire diplomatique de l'Europe*; SEIGNOBOS: *Histoire politique de l'Europe contemporaine*; CASTLEREAGH: *Correspondence*; MARRIOTT: *Castlereagh*; DUFF COOPER: *Talleyrand*; A. CECIL: *Metternich*; WELLINGTON: *Despatches*. From 1815 onwards the general histories by ALISON PHILLIPS (*Modern Europe*) and C. M. ANDREWS (*The Historical Development of Modern Europe*) will, in addition to those elsewhere mentioned, be found useful.

CHAPTER IX

RESTORATION AND REACTION, 1815–40

The Staatenbund. The Zollverein

Reaction in Germany.

The period which followed the overthrow of Napoleon was characterized by a general political reaction. Nor is this surprising. The changes in the last twenty years had been so bewildering in their rapidity that Europe craved a little repose. In no country, except perhaps in Spain, was the reactionary movement more pronounced than in Germany. It was equally noticeable in Germany as a whole, and in most of its component states. In some few states, in Bavaria, for example, and Baden and Hanover, the sovereigns granted to their subjects constitutional charters on the model of that which the example of Louis XVIII had rendered fashionable. But nowhere, except in the little duchy of Saxe-Weimar, was there anything which could be described as vigorous political life.

In Prussia.

To the general rule of reaction Prussia formed no exception. The robust liberalism of Stein had never been congenial to the king. Hardenberg, it is true, was still chancellor, but his vigour was waning, and the king fell more and more completely under the influence of Metternich and of men who, like Prince Wittgenstein, reproduced in Berlin the principles enforced by Metternich in Vienna.

PRUSSIA
1815-1866
K. OF DENMARK
K. OF SWEDEN
BALTIC SEA
Königsberg
R. Memel
Tilsit
Stralsund
Kiel
Colberg
Danzig
Helgoland (to England)
HOLSTEIN
Lubeck
GRAND DUCHY OF POMERANIA
POMERANIA
PRUSSIA
Hamburg
Bremen
MECKLENBURG
Stettin
R. Vistula
Warsaw
K. OF HANOVER
BRANDENBURG
GRAND DUCHY OF POSEN
KINGDOM OF POLAND
Hanover
Berlin
R. Oder
NETHERLANDS
Munster
PROV. OF WESTPHALIA
Magdeburg
PROV. OF SAXONY
Leipzig
SILESIA
Breslau
Aachen
PROV. OF RHINE LAND
Cologne
Gottingen
BELGIUM
HESSE
Weimar
Jena
K. OF SAXONY
Coblentz
ST. OF NASSAU
Frankfurt
K. OF BOHEMIA
Koniggratz
GALICIA
Bamberg
R. Main
Mainz
MORAVIA
FRANCE
Speier
BADEN
K. OF BAVARIA
AUSTRIA
K. OF HUNGARY
Rastadt
Strassburg
K. OF WURTEMBURG
Austerlitz
Wagram
Baden
Ulm
R. Danube
R. March
GR. DUCHY OF
HOHENZOLLERN
Munich
Vienna
Salzburg
Basel
Prussian Territory
Boundary of the Germanic Confederation
W. & A.K. Johnston
Oxford.

Prussia and the Bund.

For the new German Confederation there was no enthusiasm in Prussia. Those who had been inspired by the nationalist enthusiasm of Stein naturally regarded the Bund as the product of political obscurantism. The Prussian bureaucracy had, as we shall see, something better to do than to waste precious hours at Frankfort. The king himself, taking his cue from Metternich, soon began to look upon the Diet merely as a convenient instrument for the suppression of liberal tendencies. One characteristic effort to give reality to the Bund Prussia did make, by the attempted organization of a federal army. But the attempt was stubbornly resisted by the smaller states, who had no wish either to play an ambitious part on the European stage or to put a potent instrument into the hands of Prussia or Austria. Defeated on a question which she regarded as vital to the efficiency of the Bund, Prussia threw her weight into the centrifugal scale. She successfully resisted a proposal for creating a common German citizenship by permitting the subjects of one state to migrate freely to another, and she refused to accept the principle of arbitration for the settlement of political disputes between state and state. Prussia, in fine, was determined to play her own hand, unhampered by the simulacrum of a constitution devised at Vienna.

Domestic affairs.

She had, indeed, an ample field for the employment of her energies at home. The first and most pressing task before her was to give something of administrative unity to the eight provinces united, in 1815, under the sceptre of the Hohenzollern. Between Prussians, Pomeranians, Saxons, the Poles of Posen, the Echt Deutschen of Brandenburg, and the Gallicized Germans of the Rhineland there

was little cohesion. How were they to be welded into political unity?

The liberal prescription was a central representative assembly: a national legislature or Reichstag in Berlin. And the liberals counted confidently on the promise of the king. On May 22, 1815, Frederick William had issued a decree declaring that 'a Representation of the People' should be established. Where Provincial Estates existed they were to be reorganized; where they did not they were to be set up, and from them, by a process of double election, the central assembly was to be chosen. Whether the device would have worked cannot be decided; it never got a chance of demonstrating either failure or success. But it may well be doubted whether the political development of the several provinces was sufficiently advanced, still more whether there was enough of cohesion and solidarity between them, to have given any real chance to a central legislature, elected on this or, indeed, on any other basis.

Moreover, the tide was running, at the moment, in another direction: not towards liberalism of the English mode, but towards romanticism; not towards modernism, but towards mediaevalism. The fashion manifested itself in art, in religion, in literature, and not least in politics. To set up a brand-new Reichstag was to defy this dominant tendency; but there was an alternative expedient completely consonant with it. The *Landtage*, or Provincial Estates, were not all constructed on the same plan, and none exercised large powers, still they all had a tradition and a past behind them. Here was the chance both for reformers and romanticists, for liberals and

conservatives. In some provinces, in Silesia and Westphalia for example, the mediatized princes, or barons of the Empire (*Reichsunmittelbare*), formed a separate Estate; but generally the three Estates were: (i) ecclesiastical corporations and Ritterschaften (or manorial lords): (ii) cities; (iii) rural unions.

The functions of the *Landtage* were narrowly restricted; they had some control over taxation, less over legislation, and none at all over administration. Their procedure was antiquated, and the whole conception on which they were based was mediaeval and aristocratic.

But they had one merit: they were native and not imported institutions; they had roots in the past, even if they possessed little utility in the present.

Whether the reorganization of these Provincial Estates could be regarded as a fulfilment of the promise of 'a representative constitution' was and is a matter of controversy. An English commentator on Prussian history is perhaps inclined to attach too much importance to this question. Representative institutions have played little or no part in the making of Prussia or the evolution of the modern German Empire. Whether the resultant product would be more satisfactory if they had is a legitimate subject for discussion in another connexion. It is not relevant to our immediate task. Prussia has been made, not by legislation but by administration, not by politicians but by bureaucrats and soldiers.

Administrative reform.

The period under review has been described as reactionary in character. But political reaction was redeemed by administrative efficiency. 'No account', writes Sir Robert Morier, 'of the constitutional machinery of

Prussia would be correct which did not assign a fair and honourable place to the official hierarchy that carried the ark of the Stein and Hardenberg reforms in comparative safety through the waters of the reactionary flood from 1815 to 1848.'[1]

This compliment from a robust English Liberal was well deserved. In order to give unity to the central administration there was established, in 1817, a council of state, consisting of the princes of the blood, the heads of the army, the ministers and departmental chiefs, and the *Oberpräsidenten* of the provinces. The administration of justice was reformed; the machinery was simplified; the results were satisfactory and impartial. Assiduous attention was paid also to the development of the material resources of the country. The acquisition of the Rhine provinces was from this point of view of immense prospective importance; but their wealth was undeveloped, and little of it was as yet available for the sustentation of the central government. Meanwhile Prussia was burdened with a heavy debt; the revenue fell short of the annual expenditure; trade was backward; the manufacturers lacked both capital and enterprise, and could make no headway against English competition. Above all the whole industry and commerce of the country was hampered by an antiquated and absurd fiscal system. To all these matters the enlightened officials at Berlin gave constant consideration. Rigid economy was enforced in public departments; public credit was carefully fostered; a fresh system of indirect

[1] Morier, *Memoirs*, i. 203; and for confirmation cf. Lavisse et Rambaud, *Histoire Générale*, x. 628.

taxation was devised by Hoffmann, and finally a great revolution was effected in the fiscal relations of the several provinces of Prussia, and in the relations of Prussia with the other German states.[1] But in no department was greater zeal displayed than in educational reform.

Reference has been already made to the work of Humboldt. That work was carried on with undiminished vigour by Altenstein, who, in 1817, became Minister of Public Instruction. Altenstein established training colleges for teachers, instituted the earliest *Realschulen* in Germany, and reorganized university education, with a view to the new disposition of Prussian territories. A new university for the Prussian Rhineland was instituted at Bonn; the historic Saxon University of Wittenberg was incorporated with that of Halle; that of Frankfort-on-the-Oder, which had fallen into hopeless decay, had already been transferred to Breslau.

The educational zeal of Prussia was regarded at Vienna with considerable suspicion, and not without good reason. For it was in the Universities that German liberalism found its richest soil; particularly, at this period, in Jena. To a small knot of Jena students was due the initiation of a movement of very considerable significance. They determined to found a society which should combine the highest ideals of personal life with a great patriotic purpose: sobriety, chastity, and German unity were their watchwords. The genesis and purpose of this and kindred societies is thus described by von Sybel: *The Burschenschaften.*

> The young heroes returning from the war filled the universities with their patriotic indignation, and by the

[1] Cf. *infra*, pp. 290 seq.

foundir.g of societies of students (*Burschenschaften*), represented at all the universities, they sought to fill all the educated youth of Germany with their enthusiasm for unity, justice, and freedom. These societies, for the most part, cherished ambitions which were thoroughly ideal. They did not look to the overthrow of present conditions, but relied upon the training of the rising generation. By moral elevation and patriotic inspiration they hoped to lead the state of the future to the great goal of national unity. To be sure, their notions of this future state were generally indefinite, and were mere unpractical fancies; indeed, this enthusiasm rose in some groups to the pitch of wild fanaticism, so that they were even ready to seize sword and dagger for tyrannicide. Yet such enthusiasts never succeeded in securing in the societies at large any great following for their projects.[1]

These *Burschenschaften* spread from Jena with great rapidity, and within two years the organization had obtained a footing in sixteen universities. In 1817 the students decided, by organizing a great patriotic festival, to give cohesion to the movement initiated at Jena. The year happened to be the tercentenary of the Protestant reformation. Appropriately, therefore, Eisenach was chosen as the meeting-place. October 18–19 was selected as the date, being the anniversary of the great battle of Leipzig. The traditions of two great German movements were thus ingeniously combined. The proceedings at the Wartburg were of a kind common enough among university students: services, sermons, and for the elect a celebration of the Lord's Supper; for the many, patriotic addresses by professors from Jena; a big feast; copious draughts; speeches, toasts, and a bonfire. With

[1] Op. cit., i. 57.

the bonfire much ebullient enthusiasm; some wild talk, and a good deal of disorder. At the Wartburg the example of Luther was of course irresistible, and into the bonfire there went various emblems of militarism——a pigtail and a corporal's cane—a copy of the *Code Napoléon*, and sundry books, treatises, and documents, perhaps the Federal Act, certainly a book by Kotzebue, a dramatist who was suspected of being a secret emissary of the Tzar.

The significance of the whole proceedings has been variously estimated. At the lowest and best, an innocent and unpremeditated undergraduate outburst; at the highest and worst, a symptom of revolutionary unrest among the German intellectuals. Metternich took it very seriously, or pretended to do so. The Congress at Aix-la-Chapelle gave him an opportunity of impressing his views on the sovereigns, particularly upon Alexander, and it was not neglected.

The Wartburg Festival.

Nor did Metternich's fears wholly lack justification. Every such movement as that of the *Burschenschaften* is apt to attract the feeble-minded as well as the stronger. The Wartburg festival was followed by sporadic outbursts of crime. On March 23, 1819, Kotzebue was murdered at Mannheim by one Karl Sand. Sand was a theological student of blameless life, but weak intellect, who believed himself to be, in this act, the divinely indicated instrument of the Almighty. A few months later a medical student named Löning made an attempt upon the life of the Nassau minister Ibell, who, for some reason, had incurred the dislike of the progressives.

For the cause of German liberalism nothing could have been more disastrous than the crimes of these crazy students. Even Hardenberg declared that there could be no thought of a 'constitution' for Prussia. Arndt and the brothers Welcker were suspended from their professorships; Görres, whose paper the *Rhenish Mercury* had been previously suppressed, had to take refuge in France; even Stein and Gneisenau were subjected to the indignity of police supervision.

The Karlsbad Conference.

To Metternich the extravagances and follies of the *Burschenschaften* were a godsend. In July 1819 he had an interview with the King of Prussia at Töplitz, and having secured his concurrence he summoned the ministers of the leading German states to meet, in the following month, at Karlsbad.

The resolutions adopted at Karlsbad by the representatives of eight governments were, in September, submitted to the Diet at Frankfort. Before the eyes of his frightened colleagues Metternich drew a lurid picture of the condition of Germany. Recent events were but symbolic; there existed in the heart of Germany a monstrous conspiracy, and nothing but united and immediate action could lay the ghost.[1] Action was not delayed. The resolutions drafted at Karlsbad were formally enacted. The whole educational system of Germany was placed under police supervision; political clubs and meetings were prohibited; the Press was subjected to strict censorship, and no pamphlet containing less than twenty pages could be published without similar permission; the governments of all the federated states were

[1] Sybel, op. cit., i. 6.

to enforce these decrees if necessary by martial law, and finally a commission was set up at Mainz to keep careful watch upon all the manifestations of the democratic spirit.

Already Metternich was departing from the principle of non-intervention affirmed at Vienna. The Diet, as the smaller states had feared, was beginning to usurp the functions of the immediate sovereigns. The Emperor Francis, if no longer German Emperor, was, in von Sybel's scathing phrase, endowed by Metternich with all the authority attaching to the 'head of an all-powerful German police system'.[1]

Metternich would have gone even further, but the Frankfort Decrees were not universally approved by the minor states. The King of Würtemberg replied to Metternich's arrogant challenge by granting a further instalment of constitutional liberty to his own subjects, and by putting himself at the head of a 'purely Germanic league', to resist the aggressions of Austria and Prussia upon German liberties.

Warned by these demonstrations of independence Metternich drew back, and the *Final Act of Vienna* (May 24, 1820) represented a compromise. The Karlsbad Decrees were, indeed, renewed, but the independence of the minor states was specifically guaranteed. Four years later (1824), however, the Karlsbad Decrees, limited in the first instance to five years, were re-enacted in perpetuity. Metternich's triumph was complete.

To that triumph and to the force of the German reaction the European situation powerfully contributed. **The Holy Alliance.**

[1] i. 63.

Before the signature of the Second Treaty of Paris the Tzar Alexander had secured the adhesion of his brothers of Austria and Prussia to his famous project of a Holy Alliance. Few movements in modern European history have been more curiously misunderstood or more grossly misrepresented. As conceived by the Tzar the Holy Alliance was to inaugurate the reign of peace and righteousness on earth. We may question his prudence and even his sanity, but the purity of his motives cannot be gainsaid. The sinister repute into which the Alliance fell attaches more justly to the European Concert inaugurated by the Quadruple Treaty of November 1815. To that treaty England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia were parties, France being admitted in 1818, when the association was transformed into the 'moral Pentarchy'. Until the Pentarchy was broken up in 1822 by the action of Castlereagh and Canning, the influence of Metternich remained paramount in Europe as in Germany. Alexander of Russia and Frederick William of Prussia were more and more completely dominated by Metternich's masterful personality.

Metternich possessed the strength which comes from clearness of vision, directness of aim, and simplicity of method. He was genuinely convinced that it was his mission to extirpate the fatal canker of revolution, which for twenty-five years had been gnawing the vitals of Europe. Over the weak will and narrow intelligence of Frederick William he soon acquired an easy mastery. To win Alexander to his views was a more difficult task, but by 1818 it was accomplished. The effervescence of liberalism at Eisenach helped the conversion of the Tzar. The

murder of Kotzebue completed it. In the interval the Quadruple partners had met at Aix-la-Chapelle. The treaty concluded at Paris was renewed, but with a wholly different intent. In 1815 France was still the danger point for European diplomacy. By 1818 it was 'demagogism' which had become the common bugbear.

It is thus that European diplomacy reacted upon the domestic history of Prussia and Germany. Over both Metternich had, by 1818, obtained a complete ascendancy. Before leaving Aix-la-Chapelle he gave Frederick William and Hardenberg their orders. Provincial Landtage were permissible, but there must be no central elected legislature. The immediate danger, however, came from three sources: an uncontrolled press; the new *Gymnasien*; and, above all, the universities. 'The revolutionists', he said, 'despairing of effecting their aim themselves, have formed the settled plan of educating the next generation for revolution.' Education, therefore, must be placed under the strictest control. How implicitly Metternich's instructions were followed, the history of the Karlsbad Conference has already shown.

The decrees then adopted were the measure of the decadence of Prussian influence, the symbol and seal of the autocracy of Metternich.

But already other forces were at work destined to extrude Austria from the Germanic body and to establish on a firmer and more permanent basis the pre-eminence of Prussia. At the very moment when, terrified by the spectre of revolution so cleverly paraded by Metternich, the rulers of Prussia were surrendering their political conscience to the keeping of the Austrian chancellor,

the Prussian financiers were elaborating a scheme for the fiscal unification of Germany.

The Zollverein.

During the first half of the nineteenth century Germany was, economically and commercially, the most backward country in western Europe. And in no part of Germany was industry less advanced than in Prussia. The country as a whole had not yet emerged from the agrarian stage; the exports were mainly raw products; the mines were almost entirely unworked; manufactures were still produced by the hand-looms and spinning-wheels of domestic workers. The fiscal arrangements of Prussia reflected and accentuated the peculiarities of her political evolution. In some provinces, notably in the Rhineland, there was an approximation to free trade; in others the tariffs were exceedingly oppressive. Nowhere were duties uniform. Altogether there were 67 different tariffs, embracing no less than 3,800 categories of goods. When it is remembered that Prussia contained no less than thirteen 'enclaves', that its external frontiers were 8,000 kilometres in length, and touched twenty-eight different states, the difficulties of collection will be understood.

Law of May 28, 1818.

The first step towards order and uniformity in the Prussian dominions was taken by the enactment of the law of May 28, 1818. The credit for this initial innovation belongs to Karl Georg Maassen. Maassen was an ardent disciple of Adam Smith, but his practical policy was conditioned by the immediate requirements of Prussia. Those requirements were: new sources of revenue; the removal of antiquated fiscal barriers; the development of means of communication and transport; internal free

trade, and external protection against the products of more advanced competitors. Under the Tariff Reform Act of 1818 all raw materials were to be imported free; on manufactured articles there was to be an average duty of ten per cent. (on weight or measure, not *ad valorem*); and on 'colonial' produce 20 per cent.; and—most important—all internal custom-duties were abolished. Thus internally Prussia became for the first time an economic and commercial unit, while her external tariff was the most liberal in continental Europe; in some respects even more liberal than that of Great Britain.[1]

So far the change had affected Prussia only. But in the following year (1819) we have the first modest step towards a customs-union. Motz, who was then Prussian Finance Minister, induced Schwarzburg-Sondershausen, one of the 'enclaves' dotted about the Prussian dominions, to conclude a tariff-treaty. The 'enclave' handed over its customs administration to Prussia in return for complete freedom of commercial intercourse and a proportionate share of external customs-revenue. This arrangement was the first of many. In 1822 the example of Schwarzburg-Sondershausen was followed by Weimar, Gotha, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Schaumburg-Lippe, Rudolstadt, and Bamberg.

The significance of these events was quickly apprehended in other parts of Germany. In 1819 Nebenius, an economist of repute in Baden, published a pamphlet advocating a more extended experiment. In the same year a deputation of manufacturers, chiefly from South Germany, urged the Diet to take action. The Diet,

[1] Ashley, *Tariff History*, p. 4 seq.

however, was more inclined to induce Prussia to go back, than to help Germany forward. Between 1820 and 1828 frequent negotiations took place between the southern states, but not until the latter year was anything effected. Bavaria and Würtemberg then formed a union which was subsequently joined by one or two of their smaller neighbours. Between the Prussian scheme and that of the southern group there was a characteristic difference. The former was unitary and absorptive; in the latter the component states combined on equal terms. East Prussia quickly learnt the lesson, and when she concluded a treaty with Hesse-Darmstadt in February 1828 it was on terms similar to those arranged between the southern states: identity of fiscal privileges; an equal voice in the determination of policy, and apportionment of revenue on the basis of population.

By this time the whole of the German states, with one significant exception, were awake to the advantages of the policy initiated by Prussia. The only question was whether there should be one customs-union for the whole Confederation, or two, or several. In September a third union was formed between Saxony, Hesse-Cassel, Hanover, Brunswick, the free cities of Hamburg, Bremen, and Frankfort, and several of the Thuringian duchies. The component states undertook not to enter any other Zollverein for a period of six years. Luckily for Prussia, and indeed for Germany, this Saxon combination failed for lack of means, and in 1829 Prussia concluded an arrangement with the Bavaria-Würtemberg group. The two customs-unions were approximated, though not amalgamated; provision was made for the reciprocal

reduction of duties and for an annual conference. Meanwhile the Saxon union was gradually dissolved. The Thuringian states deserted it in 1830; Hesse-Cassel joined the Prussian Union in 1831, and Saxony itself joined Prussia in 1833.

In the same year the Treaty of 1829 between the northern and the southern systems was converted into a genuine customs-union, and thus, for the greater part of Germany, a real Zollverein came into being.

This Zollverein included seventeen states with a total population of 26,000,000 people. Its constitution was elaborate. There was to be an annual assembly or customs-parliament, representing all the constituent states, to determine the policy of the Verein, and no changes could be made without the unanimous assent of the members; between state and state there was to be complete free trade; the tariff was to be uniform on all the frontiers, and the nett proceeds were to be divided in proportion to population; all raw materials and semi-manufactured goods required for manufacturing processes were to come in free; on 'colonial produce' the tariff was to be for revenue purposes only, and even on manufactured goods it was to be moderate.

Baden came into the Zollverein in 1835, the free city of Frankfort in 1836, and a number of smaller states between 1836 and 1841. Not content with internal free trade the Union now attempted to negotiate commercial treaties with foreign Powers. So far back as 1831 Holland had consented to suspend the heavy tolls levied upon the goods of the Zollverein states passing down the Rhine. In 1841 a mutually advantageous treaty was made

with Great Britain, and in 1844 a similar one with Belgium.

Friedrich List.

Thus far the Prussian tariff reformers had looked for inspiration to Adam Smith, but, in the forties, another influence became predominant. It was that of Friedrich List, who in 1841 published his book *The National System of Political Economy*.

The effect of List's great work upon fiscal policy, if not upon economic doctrine, is comparable only to that of Adam Smith himself. Just as Adam Smith provided the philosophical apology for the industrial revolution, and inspired the free trade policy of Pitt, Huskisson, Peel, and Gladstone, so List, taking up the broken thread of the mercantilist tradition, inspired the policy of the architects of German unity. Both systems—List's no less than Adam Smith's—aim at the promotion of national wealth; but while Adam Smith, and still more some of his later disciples, suggested, if they did not actually preach, that if you seek wealth and ensue it all else shall be added unto you, List insisted that the primary aim should be national union and national strength. Once that was attained the reward of material prosperity would not, he promised, be withheld. That England could well afford the luxury of free trade, and that it was her obvious interest to induce other nations to adopt it, List did not deny. 'Any nation', he wrote, 'which by means of protective duties and restrictions on navigation has raised her manufacturing power and her shipping to such a degree of development that no other nation can sustain free competition with her, can do nothing wiser than to throw away these ladders of her greatness, to preach to

other nations the benefits of free trade, and to declare in penitent tones that she has hitherto wandered in the paths of error and has now for the first time succeeded in discovering the truth.'[1] Germany, however, was not in the position of England. As yet indeed there was no Germany. It had to be created; and in List's view the most potent instrument was Protection.

'On the development of the German protective system depend the existence, the independence, and the future of German nationality. Only in the soil of general prosperity does the national spirit strike its roots, produce fine blossoms and rich fruits; only from the unity of material interests does mental power arise, and only from both of these national power.'[2]

List, it will be seen, was at once an ardent nationalist and a convinced protectionist. Both by its political and by its economic appeal the publication of his work made an immediate and a profound impression upon his compatriots; not least upon those who were responsible for the working of the Zollverein.

During the years immediately following 1841[3] there was therefore a battle royal between free traders and protectionists. The forces on the side of the former were neither few nor feeble. Agriculture was still the staple industry of the country; down to 1850 two-thirds of the German people were employed on the land[4]; as

[1] *The National System*, p. 368. It is hardly necessary to point out that List's version of the genesis of English commercial and maritime supremacy would not pass unchallenged in England.

[2] op. cit. p. 425.

[3] The date of Dr. (afterwards Sir John) Bowring's famous *Report on the German Customs Union* was 1840.

[4] Now (1915) only about one-third.

late as 1859, the exports of grain very largely exceeded the imports, while only four-sevenths of the total exports were manufactured products. Almost to a man the agriculturists were on the side of free trade; so were the shippers and merchants of the Hanseatic cities; the bankers of Frankfort and the weavers of Saxony. On the other side were the majority of the southern states, where the spinners of Bavaria, Baden, and Würtemberg were particularly clamorous for protection. The protectionists gradually gained ground, and by 1850 duties on everything except the raw materials of manufactures had been very largely increased.

Austria and the Zollverein.

Towards the earlier stages of this remarkable development Austria manifested complete indifference. Metternich cared little about commerce and despised Prussia and her ways. But after the adoption of a protectionist policy the matter became more serious for Austria, and when, after 1848, Metternich was replaced by Schwarzenberg, Austria made determined efforts to force an entrance into the Union. Prussia steadily and successfully resisted them. But the twelve-year period, for which the treaties had, in 1841, been concluded, was drawing to a close. Austria, frustrated in her desire to join the Union, now made frantic efforts to destroy it. Fearing lest Austria might succeed, Prussia attempted to draw closer the bonds between herself and the staunch free traders in her immediate neighbourhood. As a result of these advances Hanover and Oldenburg were admitted in 1852 on terms exceptionally favourable to themselves. Early in 1853, however, Prussia came to an arrangement with Austria. A treaty was concluded postponing, until 1860,

all questions as to the admission of Austria, but at the same time mutual tariff concessions were made between Austria (for her Italian provinces) on the one side, and the Zollverein on the other. In 1853 the signatory Powers renewed the Zollverein.

The importance of the Zollverein in the modern history of Prussia and of Germany can scarcely be exaggerated. On its purely economic consequences it is not necessary to enlarge. For the first time Germany became a fiscal and commercial unit; means of communication and transport were rapidly developed; roads were improved; railways were constructed. Foreign trade showed a remarkable expansion. Between 1834 and 1842 the imports and exports increased by 100 per cent., and the custom duties rose from 12,000,000 to 21,000,000 thalers. Capital began to accumulate. Between 1853 and 1857 no less than £20,000,000 were raised for the construction of railways, while, in the same years, new banks were established with a capital of £30,000,000. To attribute the whole of this development to the customs union would of course be grossly inaccurate; but that it contributed an exceedingly important factor is undeniable.

Nor was its influence confined to the economic development of Germany.

'The Zollverein has brought the sentiment of German nationality out of the regions of hope and fancy into those of positive and material interests. . . . The general feeling in Germany towards the Zollverein is that it is the first step towards what is called the Germanization of the people. It has broken down some of the strongest holds of alienation and hostility. By a community of

interests on commercial and trading questions it has prepared the way for a political nationality.'

Thus wrote Dr. Bowring in his *Report*[1] to Lord Palmerston as early as 1840. Looking back upon the movement, we can see that the Zollverein accomplished all that Dr. Bowring, with singular prescience, claimed for it; and much more. It united the German states in bonds of mutual economic interest; it united them under the leadership of Prussia; and it accustomed them to the exclusion of Austria from the Germanic body.

Apart from the Zollverein there is not much in tne history of Prussia between 1815 and 1848 over which it is pleasant or profitable to linger. In the main it is a continuation of the story of repression and reaction, the earlier portions of which have already been recited.

The French Revolution of 1830.

The outbreak of the July Revolution in France, the collapse of legitimism in the person of Charles X, and the initiation of the experiment of a *bourgeois* monarchy, aroused great excitement in Germany. Neither Austria nor Prussia were much affected, but in many of the secondary states disturbances broke out. In Brunswick the reigning Duke Charles, one of the least estimable of princes, was deposed, and the excitement was only allayed when his successor granted a revised constitution. Riots also broke out in Göttingen, in Cassel, in Dresden and Leipzig, where in like manner the people were appeased by constitutional concessions. In the liberal south, too, there was ferment, though nothing in the nature of revolutionary violence. Indeed the German movement

[1] p. 17.

of 1830, though definitely radical in tendency, was nowhere anti-monarchical.

In the states bordering upon France danger of another kind was apprehended. It was feared that the outbreak of revolution in Paris might lead to the recrudescence of the European War. Either Belgium, Poland, or Italy might well have served to ignite combustible material.

In view of this danger the South German states felt it necessary to mobilize, but profoundly mistrusting both Austria and the Federal Diet they begged Prussia to put herself at the head of a military league which might act independently of the Diet. It was a unique opportunity for the Hohenzollern. A great part of Germany was already ranging itself under the fiscal leadership of Prussia; if in addition to the customs union there should now be organized a military union under the same auspices, Prussia would have taken a long stride towards the political hegemony of a united Germany.

Frederick William, however, was incapable of the prompt decision necessary to take advantage of the opportunity. He declined to move without the assent of Metternich. Metternich delayed an answer until he had got the Italian insurrection well in hand (March 1831). He then proceeded to frighten Frederick William with the red spectre in Europe and in Germany. The one hope for Europe was the close alliance of the three eastern Powers; for Germany, the combination of Prussia and Austria against the internal dangers of anarchy and revolution. Frederick William eagerly assented; and led by the two great Powers the Federal Diet embarked

upon a fresh crusade against popular liberties; more particularly the liberty of the press.

Metternich's renewed attack, wholly unprovoked, created the very danger against which it was directed.

In May 1832 a couple of radical journalists organized a demonstration at Hambach in the Palatinate. There were eloquent speeches on German unity, liberty, and the fraternity of free nations; much consumption of beer and plenty of boisterous enthusiasm. Prince Wrede, dispatched from Munich with four thousand troops to suppress revolution in the Palatinate, could find no sign of disorder.

But the demonstration itself sufficed for Metternich At his bidding the Frankfort Diet promptly issued a fresh series of 'Karlsbad' Decrees: the privileges of the state parliaments were rigorously curtailed; the federal forces were to support any prince who had difficulties with his people or parliament; political clubs and meetings were prohibited; the state constitutions were put absolutely at the mercy of the Federal Diet, and the press was placed under even stricter surveillance.

In April 1833 an abortive attack was made upon the Diet itself in Frankfort. But the 'revolution' was suppressed by the local battalion and the conspirators were promptly lodged in gaol. The outbreak was quite insignificant, save as an indication of the temper aroused by the reactionary and repressive policy of Metternich. That policy was indeed sowing revolutionary seed among a people eagerly bent upon constitutional reform, but not naturally inclined to revolution.

The prevailing restlessness—the spirit of innovation—

manifested itself in many directions; in art, in literature, in the natural and moral sciences, where rapid progress was at this period made; in the development at Berlin of a new school of history, rendered illustrious for all time by the work of Leopold von Ranke, of Waitz, Giesebrecht, and von Sybel; most of all, perhaps, in two theological movements, contemporaneous but antagonistic. The one rationalistic, distinguished by the work of Strauss, whose *Leben Jesu* was published in 1834–5, of Christian Baur, and of other disciples of the Tübingen school; the other orthodox and ultramontane.

Theological controversy.

The activity of the Tübingen school was evoked, in great measure, by the well-intentioned but maladroit attempt of Frederick William III to celebrate the tricentenary of the Reformation (1817) by the union of Lutherans and Calvinists. A new Liturgy, intended as a basis for reunion, served only to accentuate differences and to provoke controversy.

More serious in its results was the ultramontane movement in Bavaria, Westphalia, and Rhenish Prussia. The abolition of the ecclesiastical electorates with their lax doctrine and easy morals proved the opportunity of the Jesuits. It was not neglected. To the suffering populations of the borderlands tossed from Germany to France, from France to Prussia, the Catholic Church, relieved from the incubus of the prince-bishops, brought the genuine consolations of religion. Encouraged by their popularity with the people, the Church challenged the Prussian State, both in the Rhineland and in Polish Prussia, notably on the thorny question of mixed marriages. By 1837 the conflict had become so acute that

the government imprisoned the Archbishop of Köln and procured the deposition of the Archbishop of Posen. The prelates found support not only among the people but also in the highest quarters at Munich and Vienna, and the dispute dragged on until after the death of Frederick William.

Disjunction of Hanover and England.

While Frederick William was embroiling himself with the Catholics of Poland and Rhenish Prussia, his brother-in-law in Hanover was arousing bitter opposition among all the progressive parties. On the death of William IV of England (1837) the personal union of Hanover and Great Britain was dissolved, and the German kingdom passed to the fifth son of King George III, Ernest Augustus, Duke of Cumberland. Like his father, Ernest came to the throne determined to be 'a king'. His first act was to abolish the parliamentary constitution. This proceeding had no warrant either in law or in policy, and it aroused bitter opposition among the advanced liberal professors at the University of Göttingen. Seven of the professors, men of the highest distinction like Gervinus, Ewald, Dahlmann, and the brothers Grimm, were summarily evicted from their chairs, and three of them were actually expelled from the country. When King Ernest proceeded to dictate a new constitution, the Estates appealed against it to the Federal Diet. The majority of the secondary states supported the appeal, but overborne by Austria and Prussia the Diet eventually declined to intervene. The Hanoverians therefore had to accept from the king a brand-new constitution fashioned according to his own taste: parliamentary sessions were to be held *in camera*; the functions of the legislature

were to be purely consultative; it was to have no control over the executive, and the crown lands were to be regarded as the private property of the king.

The action of Frederick William in reference to Hanover still further disappointed the hopes of the German liberals. Even the least combative among them were now compelled to realize that from the Federal Constitution of 1815 no good could come. Alike from the point of view of liberalism and of nationalism its failure was complete, and was patent to all. The thoughts of the German liberals began to turn, therefore, towards the possibility of replacing the reactionary Bund by a popularly elected legislature representative of the German people as a whole, with an executive responsible to the legislature.

Death of Frederick William III.

One obstacle to the realization of this ambition was removed by the death in 1840 of Frederick William III. He was in the seventieth year of his age, and had reigned forty-three years. By his own subjects his loss was truly mourned. To them he had endeared himself by his unaffected piety, his modesty, his kindliness, his transparent honesty, and not least by the memory of sufferings shared with his people. His intelligence was narrow and his character weak, but it must not be forgotten that during the latter half of his long reign a marvellous transformation had been effected alike in the internal condition and in the external position of his country. Thanks to the agrarian and administrative reforms initiated by Stein, to the military reorganization effected by Gneisenau and Scharnhorst, to the educational zeal of Fichte, W. von Humboldt, Niebuhr, and Altenstein; and not least to the fiscal revolution carried through

by Maassen and Motz, a new Prussia had come into being.

More than this. The new Prussia had laid the foundations of a new Germany. The centripetal influence of the Zollverein can scarcely be exaggerated. Its machinery was capable of almost indefinite extension. The southern states, as we have seen, endeavoured to apply it to the military reorganization of Germany. But if it could satisfy the military and economic needs of Germany, why not the constitutional as well? Was Prussia ready to assume the political, as she had already assumed the commercial, hegemony of Germany? The history of the next eight years will show.

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CHAPTER X

THE REVOLUTION OF 1848. THE FRANKFORT PARLIAMENT

Frederick WilliamIV, 1840–61.

KINGS have always counted for much in Prussia. The accession of Frederick William IV was, however, an event of exceptional importance. It brought to the throne of Prussia, at a critical moment, a man of remarkable character. The year 1848–9 may without exaggeration be regarded as the turning-point in the affairs of modern Germany. To Frederick William IV there was submitted a question, pregnant with consequences for the future of Prussia, of Germany, of Europe. What manner of man was he who was confronted with a responsibility so momentous for mankind?

Character of the new king.

Frederick William IV, save in one conspicuous respect, was a typical product of the Hohenzollern. The exception may be noted first. He was no soldier; strikingly unmilitary in appearance; shambling in gait and with a marked tendency, even in youth, to corpulence. But apart from military capacity he was richly endowed. His intellect was capacious, his will firm, and his character singularly sympathetic and attractive. He was equally at home with the learned and the simple. Men of high and varied gifts, such as the chemist Bunsen, Alexander von Humboldt, the sculptor Rauch, and Ranke the historian—all alike found the charm of his manner and

his conversation irresistible. His talents were extraordinarily versatile: he was a brilliant orator, a gifted painter, a keen musician. His political judgement was not, however, equal to his intellectual capacity. It was indeed inconsistent and ill balanced; and his opinions violently oscillated from liberalism to reaction. Essentially, however, he was neither a reactionary nor a liberal, but a genuine conservative of a somewhat narrow type, immensely tenacious of his own opinion and single-minded in devotion to his own ideals. He was unaffectedly pious, his faith being a compound of Protestantism and Romanticism. His belief in the Divine right—still more in the Divine inspiration—of kingship was the primary article of his religious creed. 'The royal crown', as von Sybel says, 'seemed to him surrounded by a mystic radiance.' To the idea of the Holy Roman Empire he was romantically attached, and he could never entirely separate the Habsburg rulers of Austria from the crown they had worn so ingloriously but so long. He dreaded revolution, and he feared France as the home of revolution. But he was no tyrant; he desired with all his heart the good of his people, and it was his intention to confer upon them all such rights as were compatible with the stability and orderly administration of his kingdom. One thing, however, was essential. The rights must be understood to emanate from the sovereign, the sole source of rights and the sole distributor of benefits. Parliaments, if called, must derive their authority not from the people, but from the crown. Ministers were merely the instruments of his personal will.

Such was Frederick William IV, to whom were com-

mitted, at the most fateful epoch in their history, the political destinies, not merely of the Prussian, but of the German people. He began his reign characteristically, with a series of 'grandiloquent speeches, oratorically sublime but politically meaningless'.[1] The Estates of East Prussia, when doing homage at Königsberg, hopefully but tactlessly reminded him of the unfulfilled promise of his father in regard to a constitution. He at once made it clear that he had no intention of fulfilling it. The Provincial Estates—in their present form his own creation—he would and did reorganize. They were allowed to meet regularly every two years, to debate freely, and to print a report of their proceedings. He invited criticism, and enlarged the freedom of the press, though characteristically he resented the use to which it was put. The first acts of his reign gave promise of wide political toleration: he released a number of imprisoned demagogues; he restored Arndt to his professorship at Bonn; he appointed Dahlmann to a chair in the same university, and the brothers Grimm to posts in Berlin. But to the demand for a parliamentary constitution, in the English sense, Frederick William presented an adamantine front.

The 'constitutionalists', however, won a small success in 1842. In order to secure a loan for railway development, the king summoned to Berlin a committee of delegates from the Provincial Estates, but the delegates refused to accept the responsibility. Unless the economic development of the country was to be fatally arrested, funds must, however, be in some way obtained. Obviously, it was not a matter for the eight Provincial

[1] von Sybel, i. 118.

Assemblies with their widely divergent interests and preoccupations. A central Assembly of some kind was plainly inevitable. In February 1847 the king announced his decision. There was to be a meeting of all the Provincial Estates in Berlin: a United Provincial Diet (*Vereinigter Landtag*) or States-General. It was to divide itself into two chambers: a Curia of the princes and manorial lords—a sort of House of Lords; and a Curia of the lesser nobility, the citizens, and peasants. They were to present petitions from the provinces; to give advice to the executive on points submitted by the crown; to approve new taxes and loans; and to have a deliberative voice but no initiative in legislation. A standing committee of the States-General, of eight members, was to meet annually for financial business. Otherwise, meetings were to be at the absolute discretion of the crown.

Even this much had not been secured without strenuous opposition from his brother, Prince William, the heir-presumptive to the throne. At last, however, the prince reluctantly and with ominous warnings acquiesced. 'A new Prussia will arise. The old Prussia goes to the grave with the publication of this Decree. May the new State become as great and glorious in honour and fame as the old one has been.'

The United Diet.

The alarm of the prince was premature. The king had not the slightest inclination towards chartered democracy. 'No power on earth', he declared in his speech from the throne, 'shall induce me to transform the natural relation between Prince and People into a conventional and constitutional one. Never will I allow a blotted parchment

to thrust itself between Almighty God in Heaven and this Land, to govern us with its formalities and to take the place of the ancient and sacred bond of loyalty.'

His auditors, though unquestionably loyal to the throne, were politically recalcitrant. Led by the Gallicized radicals of the Rhineland, they demanded formal recognition of their 'rights'. In particular, they objected to the delegation of their financial functions to the standing committee of eight, and demanded that the Assembly itself should meet in regular annual session. The king promised to summon them again in 1851, but declined any further concession. The Assembly retorted by a refusal to assent to two of the financial proposals of the crown: one for a state loan for railway construction in East Prussia; the other for the relief of peasant proprietors. Both proposals were intrinsically popular; but the Assembly was determined that redress of grievances should precede supply. Both sides were obstinate, and after a brief session the United Diet was dismissed. Not, however, before one personal reputation had been made. Among the deputies who most effectively maintained the pretensions of the Crown was a young Prussian Junker, destined twenty years hence to fill the foremost place in European politics, Count Otto von Bismarck-Schönhausen.

The Prussian experiment had been eagerly watched, both by reactionaries and progressives, in every part of Germany. The dismissal of the United Diet meant that one more attempt at reform from above had failed. It meant also one more incentive to revolution.

Towards revolution events seemed to be now hastening.

Unrest in the smaller states.

In most of the secondary states there was, between 1830 and 1848, more or less persistent agitation. Stimulated by different circumstances in different states—in Hanover, for example, by the *coup d'état* of King Ernest Augustus; in Saxony by the new industrialism; in Würtemberg by economic distress; in Bavaria by the scandal raised by King Ludwig's relations with the fascinating dancer Lola Montez—the agitation was everywhere directed towards two main objects: (i) the enlargement of constitutional and personal liberty in the several states; and (ii) the realization of national unity for Germany as a whole. The impotence of existing institutions, except for mischief, had lately been demonstrated afresh by the action of the Diet in regard to Hanover. Against the combination of Austria and Prussia in favour of autocracy the smaller states fretted themselves in vain, and the idea rapidly grew that, alike in the interests of liberalism and nationalism, it was essential to devise for Germany as a whole a new constitution based upon democratic principles.

Foreign influence.

The enthusiasm of the German democrats was, during this period, greatly stimulated by foreign influences. From Switzerland, the United States of America, Poland, and above all from France, innumerable pamphlets were poured into Germany. Nor was personal propaganda lacking. Naturally, the influence of French and Swiss republicans was more particularly apparent in Baden and the Bavarian Palatinate. In those border states many political exiles from France and Switzerland found a refuge. Nor were the Polish exiles, dispersed throughout Europe after the fiasco of 1831, by any means a negligible

factor in the formation of republican feeling. Leipzig, in particular, afforded an asylum to exiled Poles, who there planned a subtle and satisfying revenge upon the three great Powers who had deprived them of country and home. 'In the Leipzig of Robert Blum, as in the Paris of Louis Blanc, the restoration of the Polish nationality to be obtained through the defeat and downfall of the Russian, Prussian, and Austrian monarchies was a cardinal point in the Republican creed.' [1]

Baden

As far as Germany was concerned, that creed found its strongest adherents in the south-west: in the Palatinate and Baden; and to Baden we must go for the formulation of the programme presented to the ruling princes in 1848. The apostles of the movement were a certain Friedrich Hecker, a deputy, and a journalist named Struve. The two leaders were strongly contrasted. 'Hecker was a type of the careless poetical student who took his politics from Schiller and plunged into the Revolution for the love of stir and movement and generous ideas. Struve was a doctrinaire of the library. The one was tall, healthy, massive, his voice a rich baritone. . . . The other was small and bloodless ("lives only on vegetables," said his friends), with a cheek of parchment and dim abstracted eyes. The charm and high courage of the one was supplemented by the considered, revolutionary doctrine of the other.' [2]

Under the leadership of these men a meeting was held

[1] Fisher, *Republican Tradition in Europe*, p. 213; and cf. chap. x. *passim* for some suggestive remarks upon the influence of the 'Poles of the dispersion'.

[2] Fisher, p. 220.

at Offenburg in Baden in September 1847, and there the programme of reform was drafted. It demanded the abolition of the reactionary decrees of 1819 and 1832; complete religious toleration; freedom of the press; trial by jury; the establishment in every state of real representative assemblies; a central representative assembly for the whole Confederation; the substitution of 'government by the people' for bureaucratic officials; the abolition of social privileges; the improvement of the relations between capital and labour, and a progressive income tax. So far the programme was democratic with a touch of Marxianism; it was not specifically or avowedly republican. Two further demands were, in this regard, more significant. The one was that a popular militia should be substituted for the standing army, and the other that soldiers should in future take an oath of fidelity not to the king but to the Constitution.

The meeting at Offenburg was followed a month later by a great conference at Heppenheim. Attended for the most part by responsible constitutionalists, the temper of the Heppenheim congress was very different from that at Offenburg. Many alternative schemes were under discussion, but as the autumn wore on opinion tended to crystallize in favour of a demand for a national German parliament, side by side with the Confederate Diet. The crystallization of opinion was opportune; for the crisis was now at hand.

The year of revolution.

On February 24, 1848, a pistol shot in Paris disposed of the July monarchy and set all Europe ablaze. France was once more a republic. Would Germany follow suit?

In answering that question it will conduce to lucidity

to keep distinct: (i) the particularist movements for the extension of constitutional and personal liberty in the several states; and (ii) the general movement for the realization of national unity. Concerned mainly with the latter, we must dismiss the former briefly.

Popular movements in the smaller states.

The news of the Parisian revolution reached Germany on February 27. Immediately petitions began to pour in to the several governments demanding, with little variation, the concession of the main points of the Offenburg programme. The governments surrendered at discretion. In Bavaria King Ludwig abdicated in favour of the Crown Prince Maximilian, who immediately installed a Liberal ministry in power. In Saxony, Hanover, Brunswick, Hesse-Cassel, Weimar, and Frankfort, most of the points of the Baden programme were promptly conceded, and thus much bloodshed was avoided. The only exceptions, and these were not serious ones, were in Baden, where a group of republicans had to be suppressed by force, and in Hesse-Darmstadt, where several collisions occurred between the troops and the populace.

The Habsburg empire.

Much more serious were the doings in the Habsburg dominions. In 1848 the dissolution of their composite empire seemed imminent. Germans, Italians, Slavs, and Magyars were simultaneously in revolt. In Vienna insurrection broke out on March 13, and with such violence that even Metternich was driven from power and compelled to fly to England. The Emperor Ferdinand, having granted everything required of him, thought it prudent to retire to Innsbruck. Vienna was left in the hands of the National Guard and an hastily organized force of university students.

In Italy, trouble was threatening even before the fall of Metternich gave the signal for revolution. The Milanese rose in March, drove out the white-coats, and proclaimed a Lombard Republic.

Venice followed suit. Charles Albert of Sardinia put himself at the head of a national movement in North Italy, and declared war on Austria. But the Italian peoples were no match for the veteran Radetzky. Badly defeated at Custozza (July 24, 1848), Charles Albert was crushed at Novara (March 23, 1849). Venice held out, under Daniel Manin, until August, but by the autumn of 1849 North Italy was once more under the heel of the Habsburgs.

The Czech rising in Bohemia was even more easily suppressed. In June 1848 there met at Prague a Pan-Slavist congress representative of Czechs, Moravians, Poles, Slovaks, Serbs, and Croats. Discussion developed into insurrrection, but Prince Windischgrätz promptly reduced the city to submission, and by the end of the month the Bohemian movement had collapsed. From Prague, Windischgrätz turned to Vienna, where, in October, the insurrectionary movement was renewed. Against disciplined troops, finely led, the Viennese were as impotent as Czechs or Italians, and by October 31 Windischgrätz was master of the capital.

There remained the revolt in Hungary. The task of dealing with the Magyars was too much for the feeble Emperor Ferdinand. On December 2 he abdicated in favour of his nephew Francis Joseph, who at the age of eighteen assumed the crown he still (1915) wears. The Hungarians at once refused to acknowledge the new

sovereign; war broke out; the Magyars were badly defeated at Kapolna (February 2, 1849); the Hungarian constitution was rescinded, and Hungary was incorporated in Austria. Louis Kossuth then proclaimed the independence of Hungary. The young emperor made a personal appeal to the Tzar Nicholas to succour the cause of legitimacy. Russia responded with 200,000 men; the Hungarian revolt was stamped out with the utmost ferocity and the kingdom was reduced to a state of vassalage. Kossuth, like Metternich, found a refuge in England.

The events in the Habsburg empire possess profound significance in relation to the German national movement; but this will be explained presently. Meanwhile, the centre of interest was at Berlin.

Prussia.

Frederick William was completely thrown off his balance, never particularly stable, by the outbreak of the 'March revolutions'. Early in March the news reached him of serious disorder in the Rhineland, in Silesia, and in East Prussia. In Berlin itself there were at least three parties. The first was a party which desired revolution of the Parisian type. Intrinsically insignificant, this party was reinforced by a large number of Poles and Rhinelanders who had recently flocked into the capital. Secondly, there was a large party of 'constitutionalists' who were ardently anxious to see the fulfilment of the promise of Frederick William III, and to have a central representative Parliament for the Prussian dominions, and a similar institution for the whole of Germany. Finally, there was the king himself not less desirous of reform than the constitutionalists, but supremely

anxious that in Prussia it should be consistent with the feudal basis of the state and should represent a natural development of the provincial Estates; and that in Germany it should proceed spontaneously from the Federal Diet and should not jeopardize the traditional place of the Habsburgs in the German economy. 'May God in Heaven save me from any attempt to drive Austria out of the Confederation. Germany without Trieste, Tyrol, and that glorious archduchy would be worse than a face without a nose.' So said the king to his confidant, Colonel von Radowitz, in November 1847.

His opinion was unchanged in March 1848; but he was no longer master of the situation.

The March' Revolution.

From the beginning of March excitement increased daily in Berlin. Great meetings were held, and fiery speeches were delivered. Foreign anarchists poured into the city to fan the flames of revolution. Sporadic conflicts took place between the populace and the police; barricades appeared as though by magic, in the streets. The king, distressed and bewildered by the menacing attitude of his people, made an abject surrender. On March 17 he signed a decree abolishing the press-censorship in Prussia, summoning the United Diet for April 2, and announcing his adherence to the Baden programme.

The mob, elated by victory, filled the Schlossplatz, and even penetrated into the palace. The king's terror was pitiable to behold. He was incapable of giving coherent orders to the troops, now placed under the command of a fine and resolute soldier, General von Prittwitz. Prittwitz cleared the palace and its vicinity without bloodshed; but a chance shot infuriated the

populace; the soldiers were compelled to attack in earnest, and much blood was shed. Frederick William, tormented by the conflicting emotions of pity for his people and concern for his own person and dignity, oscillated between repression and surrender. Now he would issue an impassioned proclamation, 'An meine lieben Berliner,' assuring them that if they would quit the barricades the troops should be withdrawn. Now he would arm the populace itself. On the 21st he was compelled to witness a ghastly procession escorting the corpses of those who had fallen in the street-fighting, and on the same day he issued a second proclamation, declaring that there was no means of salvation in the present crisis save in the closer union of the German princes and peoples under one leadership; that he was ready to assume that leadership and to merge Prussia in Germany (*Preussen geht fortan in Deutschland auf*). To symbolize the absorption of the lesser into the greater, Frederick William paraded through the streets decorated with the colours—black, red, and gold—of German nationalism.

On the same day the king undertook to summon a national Constituent Assembly, and to submit to it proposals for giving legislative effect to the Baden programme.

On the following day, March 22, it was deemed prudent to send Prince William, who had innocently incurred special opprobrium during the recent events, off in disguise to England. In Berlin, the martyrs who had been killed in the riots were buried in solemn pomp, and the king himself paid to their memory a spontaneous sign of respect. The triumph of the democrats was complete.

The National Constituent Assembly.

Two months later (May 22) the National Assembly met. Its debates, prolonged throughout the rest of the year, were conducted in a city which was increasingly anarchical. Neither the Assembly itself, nor the constitutional ministers, nor the civic guard, which had been enrolled from the more substantial citizens, could maintain order in the capital. The king himself retired to Potsdam, and encouraged by the suppression of revolution in Vienna, summoned up sufficient resolution to dismiss (November 2) the 'constitutional' ministers, to whom he had never really given his confidence. In their place he appointed the Count of Brandenburg, a natural son of Frederick William II, and a distinguished soldier, with whom was associated, shortly afterwards, a typical bureaucrat, Otto von Manteuffel. All through the troubles of the revolutionary year the army had never wavered in its loyalty to the crown. The significance of Brandenburg's appointment could not be mistaken. Frederick William had clearly made up his mind to rely not upon parchments and constitutions but upon soldiers. A week later (November 9) the Assembly was prorogued and bidden to meet a fortnight hence at Brandenburg. The delegates refused to budge, denied the right of the king to remove, prorogue, or dissolve the Assembly without its own consent, and passed a vote of no confidence in the new ministry. The protest was unavailing. The troops, under General Wrangel, enforced the order of the king; the city was placed under martial law, and, on December 5, the Assembly was finally dissolved. On the same day a new constitutional charter was promulgated by Royal Edict.

Early in 1849 elections were held, and on February 26 the Chambers met. Their first business was to legalize retrospectively the Royal Edict of December 5 under which they met. They next proceeded, in pursuance of the king's promise that the future constitution should be agreed upon 'with an assembly of the nation's representatives freely chosen and invested with full powers', to revise the constitution. The disputes of the preceding summer were reproduced, and again the king dissolved the assembly. After the dissolution two important constitutional amendments were promulgated by the king. Vote by ballot was abolished, and in place of a simple and uniform franchise based upon manhood suffrage there was introduced the three-class principle which has dominated the electoral law of Prussia from that day to this. In consequence of these amendments the extreme democrats refused to participate in the ensuing election, and, accordingly, when the chambers met, in August 1849, the work of revision was completed without friction. On January 31, 1850, the new constitution was promulgated by the king.

The Constitution of Prussia.

Under that constitutional instrument Prussia is still governed. Its provisions, therefore, demand some attention.[1] The whole constitution presupposes the supremacy of the crown. The king appoints the ministers; has a veto on legislation; enjoys a perpetual civil list, and

[1] For further details reference should be made to Lowell, *Governments and Parties in Continental Europe*, i. 6; Lestrade, *Les Monarchies de l'Empire allemand*; Ogg, *Governments of Europe*, Part II, chaps. xii and xiii; Gneist, *Die nationale Rechtsidee von den Ständen und das preussische Dreiklassensystem.*

creates titles of nobility. The *executive* is vested in a ministry of state, consisting of the chiefs of the nine principal administrative departments. This is not a Cabinet in the English sense, for the ministers are, in effect, responsible not to the legislature but to the crown, and there is little real cohesion or mutual responsibility between them. Ministers can sit and speak in either house, whether members of it or not. Besides the *Staatsministerium*, there is a *Staatsrat*, or privy council, of no great importance. Very important, on the contrary, is the *Oberrechnungskammer*, or supreme chamber of accounts. The members of this body have judicial status and responsibility, and are directly responsible to the crown. Their function is to scrutinize the details of revenue and expenditure and to report thereon to the legislature.

The legislature (*Landtag*) consists of two Houses. The House of Lords (*Herrenhaus*) [1] contains some 365 members. Of these, 115 are hereditary, and include the heads of princely houses, formerly sovereign, but now incorporated in Prussia, and hereditary noble-legislators; nearly 200 are official and ecclesiastical members; the rest are nominated for life by the crown, some on the presentation of the universities and principal cities, some *proprio motu*. The Lower House of Representatives (*Abgeordnetenhaus*) contains 433 members elected, by a process of double election, on the ultimate basis of universal manhood suffrage. But the suffrage, though universal, is 'neither equal nor direct'. The country is divided into districts,

[1] Cf. for further details Marriott, *Second Chambers*, pp. 124 seq.

each of which returns one to three members. These members are returned by electors who are themselves selected in that curious fashion which is the characteristic differentia of the Prussian constitution. Every district is subdivided into primary electoral districts, in each of which one elector is chosen for every 250 inhabitants. The qualified voters are, however, divided into three classes (and herein lies the peculiarity of the system) in such a way that each class represents one-third of the taxable property of the district. Each class chooses one-third of the electors to which the primary district is entitled. These electors then meet, and by an absolute majority-vote select the ultimate representative for the *Landtag*. Thus property secures representation as well as mere numbers. The same principle obtains in municipal and other local elections.[1]

The legislative powers of the *Landtag*, though ample on paper, are in practice confined to the consideration and amendment of projects submitted by the crown. Still less conclusive is its control over the executive. It can interrogate ministers, but they need not answer. It can appeal to the king, but he may heed it or not as he wills. With the promulgation of this constitution, which is still in essentials unamended, the purely Prussian movement of 1848–9, may be said to have run its course. That course was not unaffected by an insurrection in Prussian Poland, by the outbreak of war with Denmark,[2] and above all by the progress of the national movement in Germany as a whole. To the last we must now turn.

[1] Lowell, i. 303 seq.; Woodrow Wilson, *The State*, p. 284.

[2] Cf. *infra*, p. 343.

The German national movement.

The two movements, the one particularist-constitutional, the other national-liberal-unitary, were in practice closely intermingled. Only for the sake of lucidity are they here treated in isolation. While the progressives were in conference at Heppenheim, recognizing that 'the most powerful force of the present time, that of nationality, has become the most dangerous weapon in the hands of the enemies of legitimacy and order', Frederick William IV proposed (November 1847) that the *Bundestag* should take steps to transform the existing confederation into a closely-knit federal state, and should devise a new organization, military, economic, and judicial. Whether the Prussian king would ever have won Austria to his views cannot be known, for before steps could be taken to give substance to his dream the leadership of the national movement had passed into other hands.

Directly the news of the Parisian revolution reached Germany, Heinrich von Gagern, the Minister of Hesse-Darmstadt, and subsequently famous as the President of the Frankfort Parliament, suggested to his own Government that it should move promptly in the direction of a provisional executive and a central legislature for the whole of Germany. On March 5 he met fifty progressive leaders, mostly drawn from the south-western states, at Heidelberg, and these men appointed a committee of seven, who were to bring together at Frankfort all the men in Germany who were or had been members of their respective state legislatures.

Frankfort Vor-Parlament.

Nearly six hundred responded to the invitation and met at Frankfort on March 31. In this Convention, or

Vor-Parlament, the great majority were South Germans. Hesse-Darmstadt alone contributed 84, and Baden 72; Prussia sent 141; Austria only 2.

Hecker, Struve, and their followers desired the immediate proclamation of the German Republic, one and indivisible. But though they were noisy, they were easily outvoted, and the majority resolved that the federal government should consist of a single head with a legislature of two chambers. All details were to be left to a national Constituent Assembly to be elected by universal suffrage on the basis of one representative for every 50,000 of the population. The princes were to have no voice in the settlement. Having appointed a committee of fifty members to watch the proceedings of the *Bundestag*, which on March 30 had promulgated its own scheme of a national Constituent Assembly, the Vor-Parlament dissolved on April 4.

The Frankfort Parliament.

The elections took place, without delay, and on May 18 the Constituent Assembly—known to history as the Frankfort Parliament—met in the Pauluskirche at Frankfort, under the very nose of the *Bundestag*. It consisted at first of some 300 members, but its numbers were gradually swollen to about 550. The first discussions revealed the existence of three distinct parties. All were agreed as to the necessity of a new central authority, but the Conservatives, led by Radowitz and Vincke from Prussia, desired that it should come into being with the assent of the existing particularist governments; the extreme democrats, represented by such men as Robert Blum of Leipzig, wanted a federal Republic; but the great majority, including such men as v. Gagern, Arndt,

Jacob Grimm, the historian Gervinus, and Dahlmann of Bonn, looked for a constitutional monarchy. The choice of Heinrich von Gagern as President was indicative of the prevailing opinion, and in itself singularly felicitous. If, ultimately, the work of the Frankfort Parliament produced little immediate effect it was no fault of his.

That the assembly should have consisted so largely of professorial doctrinaires and self-opinionated journalists was unfortunate but perhaps inevitable. As a consequence much time and temper were wasted on the discussion of first principles and the elaboration of a declaration of rights. Matters trivial and grave were discussed at equal length and with equal solemnity. The only practical step accomplished in the first six months was the appointment of a central executive. Many schemes were discussed, in particular a tripartite Directory of three members, appointed by the governments of Austria, Prussia, and the smaller states, and ruling through ministers responsible to Parliament. This found little favour with the majority, who were determined upon a constitutional monarchy under Prussia. For the moment, however, owing to recent events in Berlin, it would have been impossible to carry Frederick William. It was decided, therefore, to appoint a popular young Austrian prince, the Archduke John, to be Imperial Vicar (*Reichsverweser*) to carry on the government provisionally with the assistance of a ministry selected by himself. On July 11 the Imperial Vicar made an official entry into Frankfort and proceeded to the appointment of his ministry. Into his hands the Bund resigned its functions, and for the time being ceased to exist.

Meanwhile, the Parliament was talking much and moving slowly. By Christmas 1848 the fundamental rights of the German people were at last formulated. They were of the usual type: freedom of the press, trial by jury, civil and religious equality, the abolition of feudal burdens, and so forth.

The Constitutional question still remained. The difficulties in the way of any settlement were undeniably formidable. The most serious was the relation of the Habsburgs, with their mosaic empire of Czechs, Italians, Magyars, and others, to the Germanic body. The 'great Germans' stoutly opposed the exclusion of the non-German provinces of Austria. The 'little Germans', on the contrary, starting from the idea of a glorified Zollverein and looking to Hohenzollern hegemony, insisted that the inclusion of Austria or any part of it would be fatal to the realization of German unity in any effective form. The question of the executive was no less unmanageable. Austria favoured a directory of seven princes, with two votes apiece to Austria and Prussia. Others preferred a triple executive consisting of Austria, Prussia, and Bavaria. Others again a directory of princes under the alternate presidency of Habsburgs and Hohenzollerns. Ultimately the 'little Germans' carried their point. Austria was to be excluded, and Germany was henceforward to form a federal state under an hereditary emperor. There was to be a central Parliament of two Houses, with a responsible executive, to which was entrusted the command of the army, the conduct of foreign relations, and all questions of peace and war. Defeated on the main issues Austria then allied itself with

the extreme democrats and carried a series of wrecking amendments: the emperor's veto was to be only suspensive, and the elections for the *Volkshaus* were to be based upon manhood suffrage. The moderates were in despair, but impotent. Finally, on March 28, the imperial crown was offered to Frederick William IV of Prussia.

Frederick William's decision.

Temperamentally conservative, romantically loyal to the Habsburgs, mistrustful of democratic forces, and religiously imbued with the idea of Divine Right, Frederick William found himself confronted with a cruel dilemma. Could he, for the sake of German unity, ardently desired, demean himself by accepting a crown at the hands of those who, in his view, had no warrant to confer it? Nor was the hostility of Austria any longer a negligible factor. The young emperor was once again master in his own capital; the north Italian movement had been crushed at Novara (March 23); Prague had long ago submitted; Hungary had been incorporated into Austria. Frederick William hesitated, and Germany was lost.

On April 3, 1849, his fateful decision was announced. In form, it was a postponement of the issue. He could make no decision without the assent of the sovereign kings, princes, and cities of Germany. In fact, it was a refusal. Frederick William would wear no 'crown of shame'; he would not demean himself by becoming the 'serf of the revolution'; Prussia would not merge herself in Germany.

The Frankfort Parliament refused to accept defeat. On April 11 it resolved to adhere immutably to the constitution as adopted. But the fiasco was now inevit-

able. Twenty-eight of the smaller states assented to the constitution, but Austria had already (April 5) recalled her delegates; Prussia followed suit on May 14, and by June only a rump was left to transfer its sessions to Stuttgart, where it finally dissolved itself on June 18. Before the end of 1849 the imperial administrator resigned his commission into the hands of Austria and Prussia, and on the first day of 1850 he quitted Frankfort.

A courageous experiment had disastrously miscarried, and Germany had taken the first step on the road destined to lead to 1870 and to 1914. Gagern, Dahlmann, Grimm, and their colleagues may have lacked adequate experience of affairs; but their ambition was purely patriotic and their methods were based upon the best available models. Frederick William's task, had he assumed it, would not have been easy. But could he, in 1849, have commanded the services of a Stein, Germany might have been united by parliamentary methods, and in time have been fashioned into a 'constitutional' empire. The chance was lost; and the task nobly but unsuccessfully attempted by the doctrinaires was twenty years later accomplished by the man of 'blood and iron'.

Reaction, 1851–61.

Ten years of reaction followed upon the failure of the Frankfort Parliament. During that period Austria regained not a little of the prestige which in 1848–9 she had lost. Her regeneration was largely due to the strong will and indefatigable energy of Prince Felix Schwarzenberg, who had been called to power in the dark days of 1848. Schwarzenberg took office with two objects: to

weld the Habsburg empire into a centralized administrative unity, and to humiliate and destroy the upstart power of Prussia.

Frederick William, by his honourable scruples, played, as we have seen, into Schwarzenberg's hands. But though opposed to the methods of the Pauluskirche Convention, the Prussian king heartily approved its objects. Early in 1849, therefore, he opened negotiations with Saxony and Hanover, who, like himself, had rejected the Frankfort Constitution, and in May the three North German states accepted the draft of a constitution prepared by the Prussian minister, Radowitz. This *Dreikönigsbündnis* was afterwards joined by electoral and grand-ducal Hesse and by several of the smaller states. Gagern, Dahlmann, and about 150 members of the Frankfort Parliament also declared in its favour. Prussia was to be the president of a college of princes with a federal legislature of two chambers. Austria was to be excluded from the arrangement. In January 1850 elections took place in the states which adhered to this union, and in March 1850 a second German Parliament met at Erfurt. But the *Dreikönigsbündnis*, for an effective purpose, had been already broken up by the defection and withdrawal of Saxony and Hanover. This was Schwarzenberg's chance. A *Vierkönigsbündnis* was formed by Würtemberg, Bavaria, Saxony, and Hanover, which tacitly accepted the presidency of Austria and the inclusion of the whole Habsburg empire. Meanwhile the Erfurt Parliament approved the constitution submitted by Radowitz, but the withdrawal of the two northern kings had deprived it in advance of any moral sanction, and the scheme was virtually abandoned.

Schwarzenberg, much emboldened by the Prussian fiasco, now concentrated all his endeavours upon a simple restoration of the old federal constitution of 1815. At this point Austria and Prussia were brought to the verge of war in reference to the constitutional disputes which broke out between the Elector of Hesse and his local Estates. The Elector appealed to the Federal Diet. His subjects looked to Prussia. The Diet decreed federal execution ; Frederick William disliked the idea of federal troops in Cassel, and mobilized his army. Things looked like war, but Frederick William at the last moment gave way, and in November 1850 Schwarzenberg met the Prussian minister, Manteuffel, at Olmütz to arrange a settlement of all differences outstanding between the two Powers. The 'Union' was dissolved ; the Bund restored the authority of the Elector in Hesse ; Prussia came back into the fold of the Germanic Confederation, and sent a delegate to Frankfort (May 1851). In January 1852 the Emperor Francis revoked the 'March' constitution for Austria.

Schwarzenberg's triumph was complete. Reaction reigned supreme. The efforts of the last four years seemed to be entirely fruitless. It was not so in reality. Despite the fiasco in which the Frankfort Parliament issued, it gave a real impulse to the idea of national unity in Germany. Nor did the constitutional movement in the several states wholly evaporate. Even in Prussia '48 left a permanent impress upon the constitution, Frederick William having declined after the Habsburg mode to revoke his concessions. This was the only check Schwarzenberg suffered in his reactionary career. In 1852, however, that

brilliant and masterful statesman died. In four years he had succeeded in raising the prestige and power of the Habsburgs to a point at least as high as any attained in Metternich's best days.

But a star more brilliant than Schwarzenberg's was just rising above the horizon in North Germany. In 1857 the old king, Frederick William, fell a victim to the mental malady from the incipient stages of which his excitable brain had never been far removed. His brother, Prince William, became Regent,[1] and four years later he ascended the throne as William I. One of the first acts of the new king (Sept. 1862) was to appoint as minister-president Count Otto von Bismarck.[2] For thirty years Bismarck was the dominant personality in Germany if not in Europe.

For further reference:

H. VON SYBEL, *Die Begründung des Deutschen Reichs*, invaluable from this point onwards (there is an Eng. trans. by Perrin and Bradford, N.Y. 1890); R. E. PRUTZ, *Zehn Jahre (1840–50)*; BRYCE, *Holy Roman Empire* (supplementary chapter); L. VON RANKE, *König Friedrich Wilhelm IV*, vol. vii of *All-Deutsche Biographie*; BISMARCK, *Letters*; MAURICE, *Revolution of 1848*.

[1] Actually in 1857; formally October 7, 1858.

[2] See p. 339.

CHAPTER XI

THE PRUSSIANIZATION OF GERMANY

The Rule of Bismarck: Schleswig-Holstein and the Seven Weeks' War

William I.

The reign of William I covers the most important period in the evolution of Prussia and in the history of modern Germany. Nor was the personality of the new sovereign the least important factor in the conspicuous success of his reign. His intellect was not exceptional, but his character was absolutely sound. He was industrious, conscientious, entirely loyal to his servants, and endowed with the most indispensable of all gifts for a monarch, that of detecting capacity in others. 'Disinclination to break with the paternal traditions and with old-standing family relations was', said Bismarck, 'as strong with King William as with his brother; but so soon as, under the guidance of his honour, whose sensitiveness lay as much in his German sword-belt as in his consciousness of being a monarch, he felt compelled to decisions which weighed heavily on his heart, you felt certain that if you stuck to him he would never leave you in the lurch.' The foundation of his character was a genuine piety and an unshakeable reliance upon the decrees of Divine Providence. He had little of the mysticism of his father and his elder brother, but was a simple, manly Christian. In political opinions he was

no bigot; he believed in the established order; but he combined liberal sympathies in detail with rigid conservatism in essentials. Above all he was unwaveringly convinced of the Divine Right of kingship, and of the Divine approval of Prussia's 'German mission'.

The last years of the reign of Frederick William had been marked by a strong *Junker* reaction, which found expression in a reform of the composition of the House of Lords, and of local government, in both cases favourable to the influence of the great landowners. The brains of this party were supplied by Friedrich Julius Stahl, Professor of Constitutional Law in the University of Berlin, and described by Lord Acton as 'the ablest Jew since the destruction of Jerusalem'. The opposition of moderate liberals looked with hopeful expectation to Prince William; nor were they disappointed.

Army reform: Moltke and Roon.

One of the first acts of his regency was to instal in office a moderate liberal ministry under Prince Anton von Hohenzollern, the head of the Roman Catholic branch of the family. Helmuth Karl Bernhard von Moltke (1800–91) was appointed Chief of the General Staff, and in 1859 Albrecht Theodor Emil Count von Roon (1803–79) became Minister of War. The latter appointments were highly significant. They indicated that the Regent, himself a keen, capable, and experienced soldier, meant to take in hand, without delay, the reform of army organization. These were the three men who were responsible for the perfecting of that most effective of all fighting machines, the Prussian army, and all remained continuously in office until the final triumph was achieved in 1871.

The principles of von Roon's army reform were dictated to him by his practical experience as a soldier, more particularly during the mobilizations of 1832, 1849, and 1850. The first was a strict enforcement of the universal liability to military service. The period of liability was at the same time reduced from nineteen years to sixteen. Of these, three were to be spent in the line, four in the reserve, and nine in the Landwehr. By this means v. Roon hoped to increase the number of annual recruits from 40,000 to 63,000, the peace establishment from 150,000 to 213,000, the infantry battalions from 135 to 153, and to raise 18 new cavalry regiments. As an effective war force the Prussian army would then consist of 371,000 men of the line, 126,000 reserve, and 163,000 Landwehr, though the last were not to be called up on mobilization. This great army von Roon rearmed with the breech-loading needle-gun, a new weapon which, adopted first by Prussia, gave her the victory over Austria in 1866.

War of Italian independence, 1859.

The military prestige of Prussia's rival suffered a considerable shock in 1859. In that year the issue was at last decided between the young Italy and Austria. 'What can I do for Italy?' was the question addressed to Count Cavour by Napoleon III at the Congress of Paris (1856). What Cavour meant him to do was clearly seen when in 1859 Napoleon himself marched at the head of the French army to the assistance of Sardinia. The Emperor's avowed intention was 'to free Italy from the Alps to the Adriatic'. The rapid victory of the allies might have gone far to achieve that object, when to the amazement of Europe and the consternation of Italy, Napoleon suddenly stopped short and concluded with the Emperor

Francis Joseph the armistice of Villa Franca (July 1858). Austria was to give up Lombardy to Italy, but to retain Venetia and the great fortress of Mantua.

The motives of Napoleon in effecting this amazing *volte-face* have been endlessly canvassed. Plainly, among the factors which contributed to his decision was the rapid mobilization of a Prussian army on the Rhine. Curiously enough the same reason had a powerful influence upon the Emperor Francis Joseph. When the preliminaries of Villa Franca were laid before the Prince Regent at Berlin he strongly advised his brother of Austria not to accept the terms. At the same time he offered the services of the Prussian army against France; but on one condition: that he himself should have command of the whole federal forces of Germany. The Emperor Francis Joseph refused the offer. He would accept the military support of Prussia only on the impossible condition that the Prussian army itself should be placed under the command of the general to be appointed by the Federal Diet. Prussia's refusal of this insulting suggestion was a matter of course. The moral was pointed by the Prince Regent in a conversation with the King of Bavaria.[1] 'Prussia was on the point, at the head of her army and at the head of the German Confederation, to carry the war to France at a moment when the chances were all in our favour. Had we been victorious Prussia would have come out with a heightened position in Germany and in the world at large. It was the task and *will* of Austria to prevent this, and for this purpose the sacrifice even of Lombardy

[1] Recorded in an important *Memorandum* by the former dated June 20, 1860. Cf. Morier, op. cit., i. 235.

did not seem too great.' 'The gist of the thing is,' as Moltke wrote to his brother, 'that Austria would rather give up Lombardy than see Prussia at the head of Germany.'

The Italian war had, then, for Germany a threefold significance: it dealt a heavy blow at the prestige of Austria; it embittered, at a critical moment, the personal and political relations of the Austrian and Prussian rulers, and, finally, by contributing to the unification of Italy under the House of Savoy, it gave much encouragement to those who were working for a similar consummation in Germany. A further impulse was given to the German movement by the formation of a *National Union*, under the presidency of Rudolph von Bennigsen of Hanover, and a little later (December 20, 1861) by the promulgation of an important manifesto by the King of Prussia. The king declared that political unity could be achieved only by the drawing together of all the German states, other than Austria, under the hegemony of Prussia. When this had been accomplished united Germany might conclude a treaty with Austria.

Constitutional crisis.

This manifesto signalized the succession of the Prince Regent to the throne (January 2, 1861). Unfortunately, the king's accession synchronized with an acute constitional crisis. The army proposals were exceedingly unpopular, and when the new Chamber met on January 14, 1862, they were subjected to the severest criticism. The king accordingly dissolved the Chamber and appointed a new ministry, under Prince Adolph von Hohenlohe. The Government fared badly in the elections which ensued, and the new Chamber was found

to contain a very large majority of 'progressives'. The financial proposals, including a provision for the reorganization of the army, were rejected, and the king was placed in a difficult and, indeed, humiliating situation. Officers wearing his uniform had to be dismissed without the pay due to them.

Bismarck. At this crisis the king called to his counsels the statesman who was destined to render his reign the most illustrious in German history.

Born on April 1, 1815, just a month after Napoleon's escape from Elba, Otto Eduard Leopold Count von Bismarck was now a man in the prime of life, some fourteen years the junior of his sovereign. His father was a Junker, whose family had been established in Brandenburg long before the Hohenzollern. From him he inherited his magnificent physique. His brains he got, as do most men, from his mother. She was a Fräulein Mencken, daughter of a distinguished civil servant and granddaughter of a professor at Leipzig. Educated at the gymnasium of Berlin and at the universities of Göttingen and Berlin, Bismarck was destined for a diplomatic career. After a year or two in the civil service he undertook, with his brother, the management of the family estates in Pomerania, and thus, like Cavour, he came into touch with those practical problems which, in the education of a statesman, are at least as valuable as the experience of academies and courts. In Pomerania he combined the study of Spinoza with the practice of agriculture; but to his neighbours he was known chiefly as a young man of great stature, strength, and courage; a hard-drinking, hard-riding, practical-

joking Junker; 'the mad Bismarck.' Like Cavour he travelled extensively in England and France, being from childhood a master of both languages. In 1845 he became a member of the Provincial Diet of Pomerania, which he represented in the United Diet of Berlin in 1847.

During the revolutionary year he revealed himself as a strong conservative and devoted to the monarchical idea, whether represented by Hohenzollern or Habsburg. Deeply hurt by the ignominious conduct of his sovereign, and disgusted by the anarchy of the times, Bismarck withdrew from the life of cities for a while, but in 1849 he took his place in the newly-elected lower chamber. To the idea of 'merging Prussia in Germany', still more to his master's acceptance of the imperial crown at the hands of a democratic mob, he was fanatically opposed.

Consistently, therefore, he accepted in 1851 the appointment of Prussian envoy to the Federal Diet at Frankfort. He took his place in the restored Diet, as he tells us himself, with 'feelings of admiration, nay, of almost religious reverence for the policy of Austria'. Residence at Frankfort was to Bismarck as the historic visit to Rome was to Luther. He learned to know the ways of Austria, and more particularly to appreciate her inveterate hostility to Prussia. 'I have brought away as the result of my experience from the eight years of my official life at Frankfort the conviction'—thus Bismarck wrote to Schleinitz in 1859—'that the present arrangements of the Bund form for Prussia an oppressive and at critical times a perilous tie. . . . I see in our connexion with the Bund an infirmity which we shall have to repair

Frankfort, 1851–9.

sooner or later *ferro et igni*, if we do not apply timely remedies to it at a favourable season of the year.' [1]

Early in his residence at Frankfort he had formed the conclusion that a struggle *à outrance* between Austria and Prussia was inevitable. For that struggle he steadily prepared: cultivating the friendship of the minor sovereigns; strengthening their economic ties with Prussia; urging upon his own king a more independent and bolder diplomacy in the wider European sphere. At least one fixed maxim of his later policy is already formed at Frankfort: 'Prussia must never let Russia's friendship wax cold. Her alliance is the cheapest among all continental alliances, for the eyes of Russia are turned only towards the East.' There must, therefore, be no alliance with England and France in the Crimean War. 'We had absolutely no real cause for a war with Russia and no interest in the Eastern question that could possibly justify a war with Russia . . . we should, without provocation, be attacking our hitherto friend either out of fear of France or for the *beaux yeux* of England and Austria.' [2] Of France he had no fear. A flying visit to Paris gave him the opportunity of taking the measure of the new Emperor. But France might be used to weaken Austria. Above all, no Prussian or German resources must be squandered to promote, or even to defend, in Italy, for example, the non-German interests of Austria.

Petersburg and Paris.

In 1859 Bismarck was transferred to the embassy at Petersburg, and after three years usefully employed in

[1] Prince Bismarck's *Letters*, pp. 107–16. The whole epistle—a lengthy one—is deserving of attentive study.

[2] Bismarck's *Reflections and Reminiscences*, i. 124.

Russia he became ambassador at Paris. But for a few months only. In September 1862 he was recalled to Berlin as the only man capable of dealing with the constitutional crisis at home. From that day onwards, as minister-president of Prussia, as chancellor of the North German Confederation, and then of the German Empire—Bismarck was continuously in power until, in 1890, the young emperor 'dropped the pilot' who had guided the ship of state through many a storm. Throughout those years he was, as has been said, 'the minister of a semi-autocratic king and of a semi-constitutional country. He had to reckon at once with the royal favour and with formidable political combinations.' Yet he never wavered in the course he had marked out for himself. He came into power well equipped for his work. His diplomatic experience at Frankfort, Petersburg, and, brief though it was, in Paris, had given him first-hand knowledge both of the hopeless ineptitude of the existing political system in Germany, and of the intricacy of the main currents of European diplomacy.

His first task was to inspire his sovereign with courage for the fight before them. On his first interview at Potsdam he found the king with an act of abdication already signed. It was promptly torn up. The king's depression returned a week or two later after a sojourn with the queen at Baden-Baden. 'I can see,' said the king, 'where all this will end. Over there, in front of the Opera House, they will first cut off your head and then mine.' 'Et après, sire?' said the minister. 'Après we shall be dead,' replied the king. 'Can we perish more honourably—I like Lord Strafford, Your Majesty not like

Louis XVI but like Charles I?' The minister won: the king went forward to the fight against his parliament.

It was a fateful moment for Prussia; for the monarchy; for the minister. But Bismarck never faltered. He purged the public service, the army no less than the civil service, of all who showed liberal inclinations; he carried through the army reforms, devised by Moltke and Roon; he spent money which had not been voted. 'The great questions of the time are not to be solved by speeches and parliamentary votes, but by blood and iron.' Of both Bismarck was profuse.

The Polish insurrection.

In 1863 he got an opportunity which he turned to admirable account. In that year the Poles rose in revolt against Russia. The revolt was ill-advised, inopportune, and from the outset hopeless. But it gave Bismarck the chance of demonstrating the insidious and calculated friendship of Prussia for Russia. 'Prussia,' so the Tzar was informed, 'would stand shoulder to shoulder with him against the common enemy.' Bismarck's support of Russia was not purely altruistic. He had long been afraid of Polish independence. 'No one,' he wrote in 1848, 'could doubt that an independent Poland would be the irreconcilable enemy of Prussia.' He was of the same opinion in 1863, and he never ceased to hold it. Nor was it peculiar to him. The King of the Belgians shared it. 'If,' wrote Leopold, 'a Poland such as the Garibaldians desire could be restored it would be in close alliance with France, and Prussia, between the French on the Rhine and a French province on the Vistula, *could not exist*.' Nevertheless, Bismarck's immediate motive was an anxiety to establish a credit upon which he could draw at St. Petersburg.

That Austria and the Western Powers would be against him, Bismarck was well aware. But Napoleon was becoming deeply involved in Mexico, and for the 'democratic' diplomacy of England he had a characteristic contempt.

Lord Russell combined a priggish and hectoring tone with an unreadiness to back his convictions by force. He addressed to the Tzar a characteristic homily on the sanctity of the treaties of 1815 and the healing virtues of constitutional liberty. The Tzar, in reply, politely told him to mind his own business.[1] Napoleon was anxious that Great Britain should join him in summoning a European Congress. But England, increasingly mistrustful of Napoleon's motives, declined, and thus at a crucial moment the *entente* of the Western Powers was weakened. From this incident Bismarck drew his inferences, and they were not flattering to English statesmanship. Moreover, the Polish business reacted unfavourably upon the position both of England and France in relation to the Danish duchies.

The Schleswig Holstein question.

The problem presented by the position of these duchies was in 1863 again raised in an embarrassing form by the death, without heirs male, of Frederick VII, King of Denmark and Duke of Schleswig and Holstein.

This question forms the first part of the trilogy into which Bismarck's diplomacy resolves itself. The consummate adroitness with which he utilized the problem for ulterior purposes laid the foundation of all his subsequent successes. It is essential, therefore, despite Lord

[1] Cf. Day, *Russian Government in Poland.* Prince Gortschakoff's very able despatches are there printed *in extenso.*

Palmerston's famous aphorism, that the bearings of the question should be clearly apprehended.

The parties to the dispute were five: (1) the King of Denmark, who claimed that the duchies should descend with the Danish crown; (2) the Germanic Confederation, which regarded Holstein simply as a German duchy and insisted that Schleswig was indissolubly united to Holstein; (3) Prussia, who wanted to absorb both duchies into the kingdom of Prussia; (4) Austria, who was dragged into a quarrel which only remotely concerned her, for his own purposes, by Bismarck; and finally (5) Great Britain and the other signatories of the Treaty of London (1852), by which the integrity of the Danish monarchy was guaranteed.

Holstein was a German duchy inhabited by Germans and forming an integral part of the Germanic body. Schleswig was largely, though less exclusively, German in blood and speech, but was legally a fief of the Danish kingdom. The two duchies were, according to the German theory, indissolubly united. In 1460 Count Christian of Oldenburg, who in 1448 had become King of Denmark, was elected Duke of Schleswig and Holstein by the Estates of those duchies. But the union between the crown of Denmark and the duchies was as purely *personal* as the connexion between England and Hanover. The personal nature of the tie was still further emphasized by the *Lex Regia* of 1665 which made the Danish crown transmissible to males or females while the Salic law was maintained in the duchies. That personal union continued until the death of Frederick VII in 1863.

Frederick VII was an only son and himself childless.

The Danes, therefore, foreseeing difficulties, had made strenuous efforts to get the duchies organically incorporated in the kingdom. The duchies, on the contrary, resisted incorporation, and in 1848 they rose under Frederick of Augustenburg, Prince of Schleswig-Holstein, and declared their independence. But for German interference the insurrection would have been suppressed by the Danes and the duchies would have been incorporated. The Federal Diet, however, acknowledged the provisional government set up under Prince Frederick and sent an army to his assistance. The Danes retorted by a blockade of the North German coasts, and inflicted great injury and profound humiliation upon Prussia.

Partly owing to domestic preoccupation, and partly to the lack of a fleet, the war was half-heartedly pursued by Germany, and in August 1848 Prussia, acting on behalf of the Germanic body, concluded the truce of Malmoë. In April 1849, however, Denmark renewed the war, which was carried on with varying fortune until, under English mediation, a further armistice was arranged (July 10, 1849). Eventually, after endless negotiation, the Treaty of London was concluded in 1852. The signatory Powers —Great Britain, Austria, France, Prussia, Russia, Norway and Sweden—recognized the right of Prince Christian of Glücksburg to succeed to 'the whole of the Dominions' then united under the Danish crown. The claims of the Augustenburg family were at the same time liquidated by a money payment. It is to be noted that the Bund was not a party to the treaty, and that the Holsteiners from the first disputed its validity.

In 1855 King Frederick annexed Schleswig to the

Danish kingdom, and at the same time, without the assent of the Holstein Estates, conferred 'Home-Rule' upon Holstein. These arrangements were confirmed by charter (March 30, 1863). His action was strongly resented alike by the Holsteiners, who were thus separated from Schleswig, and by the Germanic Bund.

On the death of Frederick (November 15, 1863) Prince Christian of Glücksburg succeeded without dispute as Christian IX to the throne of Denmark. Could he be permitted, in accord with the Treaty of London (1852), but in defiance of the *Lex Regia* of 1665, to succeed to the duchies as well?

The German Diet immediately asserted the claims of Prince Frederick of Augustenburg, and demanded that the charter of March 30 should be cancelled. Denmark refused to cancel it, and thereupon an army of Saxon and Hanoverian troops marched into Holstein to occupy the duchy on behalf of the Bund and its candidate Prince Frederick.

Bismarck's policy.

Bismarck now found himself in a very difficult position. He had made up his mind to get the duchies not for the 'Bund' but for Prussia alone. The harbour of Kiel, the possibility of uniting the North Sea and the Baltic by a canal under the control of Prussia, afforded motives sufficiently intelligible. In the background Bismarck perceived also a means of bringing to a final issue the secular rivalry of the two great German Powers. But how were all these objects to be simultaneously achieved?

Bismarck could count, thanks to Poland, on the active sympathy of Russia; upon the stupidity of the Habsburgs; upon the anxiety of Lord Russell to avoid war

at any price. Even Napoleon might look kindly upon Prussia's action if it was calculated to embroil her with Austria.

Austria and the Duchies.

That Austria should have played into Bismarck's hands, that she should have consented 'to pull the chestnuts out of the fire' for him in the duchies, that she should have left the Diet in the lurch and have wantonly sacrificed her cherished influence over the smaller states, is unintelligible except on the hypothesis of political hypnotism. Bismarck, it is true, played his game with Machiavellian astuteness and consummate coolness and skill; but all the cards were against him. The claims of the Augustenburg prince were recognized by the Diet, by the Prussian Parliament, by King William himself, by the Crown Prince; even von Roon could not deny them. Until he persuaded Austria to join him Bismarck was absolutely alone in refusing to recognize Prince Frederick. Austria was won by shaking in her face the red flag of democratic revolution. 'Under the insane persuasion that there was no other mode of checkmating German liberalism,' Austria was induced to 'grasp as friendly the hand that was prepared and destined to inflict deep humiliation'[1] upon her emperor and his empire. The Emperor Francis Joseph was persuaded by Bismarck that to allow the Diet a free hand in the duchies was to open the floodgates of German democracy.

Accordingly, on February 1, 1864, Austria and Prussia, repudiating the action of the Diet, occupied the duchies,

[1] Cf. for a contemporary view of these affairs by an accomplished diplomatist, Malet, *Overthrow of the Germanic Confederation*, pp. 75, 199, and *passim*.

as signatories of the Treaty of London and as champions of the integrity of the Danish monarchy.[1] In April a congress was summoned to London. The English contention was that the Bund had a right to declare federal execution in regard to Holstein, but none in regard to Schleswig. But for that and other opinions maintained by England Bismarck cared nothing. He was convinced that the Western Powers did not 'mean business', that their arguments were purely academic, and for argument unbacked by force he had no respect.

The fighting in the duchies was soon over; in August the Danes abandoned a hopeless struggle, and in October, by the Treaty of Vienna, Denmark renounced all her rights over the duchies to Austria and Prussia conjointly. 'Thus was accomplished to the reproach of all Europe, and in violation of public law and principle, an act of high-handed violence and spoliation which the judgement of history will class as only secondary to the partition of Poland.'[2]

The most difficult move in Bismarck's game was still to come. How was he to evict Austria, push aside Prince Frederick of Augustenburg, and confirm the duchies in the sole possession of Prussia?

Austria, at this point, warmly espoused the claims of the Augustenburgs, and proposed that the duchies should be handed over to Prince Frederick as a member of the Germanic Confederation. Bismarck, momentarily driven

[1] As an illustration of Bismarck's superb effrontery cf. Note to Great Britain, *Parl. Papers*, *1864*, *Denmark and Germany*, iii. 639, ap. Mowatt, *Select Treaties* (Clar. Press), p. 70.

[2] Malet, op. cit., p. 29.

to bay by the support given to Austria by his own king and the Prussian Parliament, agreed to recognize the prince on terms which would have meant the complete subjection of the new principality to Prussia, in foreign affairs and military organization.[1] The prince himself refused the offer on these conditions; war seemed imminent between the two great Powers, but neither side was quite ready and on August 14, 1865, the Convention of Gastein was concluded. Austria, for the time being, was to have Holstein; Prussia to have Schleswig and Lauenburg, with the right to construct a canal through Holstein from the North Sea to the Baltic. Kiel was to become the base of a German federal fleet, though the harbour was to be under the control of Prussia.[2]

The Convention obviously avoided the real point at issue; it was merely intended 'to paper over the cracks' until Bismarck was ready. Before delivering his blow at Austria he wanted to be quite sure of his ground in Europe. Russian friendship was, after 1863, assured. Great Britain could be ignored. France and Italy must be secured.

In October 1865 Bismarck had his famous interview with Napoleon III at Biarritz. The emperor, smarting under a sense of recent failure in Mexico, not happy as to the situation in France, and lured by the bait of re-establishing his prestige at home and abroad, fell an easy prey to the astute bluntness of the Prussian statesman. The Italian question had gravely compromised Napoleon's position with the French clericals. He would gladly have

[1] Full details in Malet, op. cit., pp. 98–9.

[2] Mowatt, *Select Treaties*, p. 71.

furthered the cause of Italian unification, if Rome could be saved for the Pope. Bismarck was ready with the solution. Napoleon should bestow Venice upon Italy and Italy should help Prussia against Austria. Then as to France: when Austria and Prussia were mutually exhausted, Napoleon would step in as mediator, and, as a slight acknowledgement of his good offices, would be pressed to accept—perhaps the Rhine frontier, perhaps Luxemburg, perhaps parts of Belgium or of Switzerland. Bismarck was prolific in hints, but cautious in promises; above all, he left no scraps of paper behind him at Biarritz to embitter the recollection of a well-spent holiday.

The firstfruits were gathered in Italy. Victor Emmanuel, with some magnanimity, gave Austria the first chance. In 1865 he offered Austria his help against Prussia in return for Venetia. Naturally but unwisely the emperor refused the offer, and in April 1866 Victor Emmanuel came to terms with Bismarck. Italy was to declare war on Austria if war broke out between Prussia and Austria within the next three months.

The Seven Weeks' War.

Bismarck had now got three months in which to provoke Austria to war. He was ready. The conflict which ever since the days of Frederick the Great had been inevitable was at last to be brought to the final test.

As far back as 1863 Austria had proposed a meeting of all the sovereign princes and free cities at Frankfort to discuss the reform of the Bund, and the attainment of German unity. King William of Prussia alone refused the invitation, and his refusal was reluctant. Bismarck, however, insisted that 'the Austrian projects of reform did not harmonize with the proper position of the

Prussian monarchy or with the interests of the German people'. This was the gage of battle. Only the emergence of the Schleswig-Holstein question postponed it. By 1866 it could be postponed no longer. The treaty with Italy, in itself, forbade postponement. The Gastein Convention now proved its value. The cracks re-appeared. Bismarck complained that Austria was encouraging the claims of the Augustenburgs in Holstein. Prussian troops were thereupon marched into the duchy; Austria withdrew and appealed to the Bund. Bismarck denounced the Bund as the source of all the weakness of Germany: on June 14 the Diet agreed to mobilize the federal army against Prussia; Prussia, on the same day, formally withdrew from the Bund, and on the next day (June 15) declared war upon Saxony, Hanover, and Hesse. On the 18th she declared war upon the other members of the Bund, including Austria.

The war was short and sharp. Within six weeks not Austria only, but Germany, lay prostrate under the heel of Prussia. By June 18 Prussian troops were in occupation of Hanover, Hesse, and Saxony. On the 28th the Hanoverian army, despite some initial success at Langensalza, capitulated to General Vogel von Falkenstein. The terms of capitulation involved the extinction of the kingdom of Hanover and its incorporation in Prussia.

Meanwhile the main Prussian armies converged upon Bohemia: one, under Prince Frederick Charles, marching through Saxony; the other, under the Crown Prince, through Silesia. A week's brilliant campaign culminated (July 3) in the crushing defeat of the Austrian forces at Königgrätz (Sadowa); before the end of the month the

Königgrätz.

Prussians were within striking distance of Vienna, but Bismarck persuaded his master to forgo the triumph of an entry into the enemy's capital; terms of peace were arranged on July 26, and one of the most momentous wars in all modern history was at an end.

The Treaty of Prague.

The definitive peace was signed at Prague (August 2, 1866). On two points Bismarck was adamant. Austria must acknowledge the dissolution of the 'Germanic Confederation as hitherto constituted' and 'consent to a new organization of Germany without the participation of the Imperial Austrian State' (art. iv). Venetia must go to Italy. For the rest, Bismarck wished to treat Austria with all the leniency which was compatible with the attainment of the paramount objects of the war. The indemnity was a light one, and, at Austria's special request, the integrity of Saxony was respected. Hanover, Hesse-Cassel, Nassau, the free city of Frankfort-on-the-Main, together with the Danish duchies, were annexed to Prussia; but by article v it was provided that the populations of the northern districts of Schleswig should be reunited to Denmark, if by a free vote they expressed a wish to be. All the states north of the Main were to form a North German Confederation under the hegemony of Prussia. The southern states were to be permitted to form an association of their own. Their relation to the Northern Confederation was subsequently to be determined.

Though Austria was spared any territorial sacrifice, except that of Venetia, the results of the Seven Weeks' War were of high significance to her, to Prussia, and to Germany as a whole.

Austria ceased to form part of Germany. Her

'gravitation towards Buda-Pesth', perceptible since 1648, was still further accentuated. If she was ambitious of expansion, it must be at the expense of Roumans or Slavs, not of Germans. But with the new Austrian Empire Bismarck desired the friendliest relations. He was already looking ahead to the next move in his game—the conflict with France. He was looking ahead still farther. The 'dual alliance' was implicit in the Treaty of Prague.

The result of the Seven Weeks' War was even more significant for Prussia. For the first time the Hohenzollern were masters of a dominion stretching continuously from the Rhine to the Baltic; they acquired nearly 25,000 square miles of territory and nearly 5,000,000 new subjects: all, with the exception of some Danes in Schleswig, of the purest German blood; they obtained in Kiel a magnificent naval harbour; and finally they secured a position of undisputed supremacy in North Germany.

The North German Confederation.

In order to give formal effect to this supremacy, Prussia laid before the North German states the draft of a treaty which was eventually accepted by twenty-two states. The contracting states undertook to send plenipotentiaries to Berlin to draft a constitution which was then to be laid before a Constituent Assembly elected on a popular basis in all the confederate states. The plenipotentiaries met in Berlin in December 1866 and the draft of a constitution was approved on February 7, 1867. The Constituent Assembly met on February 24, and finally approved the Constitution on April 16. The Constitution, as approved, was then submitted to and accepted by the Parliament of each separate state.

On July 1, 1867, the North German Confederation came legally into being. It consisted of: Prussia, Saxony, the grand duchies of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Oldenburg, and Saxe-Weimar, the duchies of Brunswick, Anhalt, Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, the free cities of Hamburg, Bremen, and Lübeck, with smaller duchies and principalities—twenty-two in all. The princes retained certain sovereign rights: they might still summon local Estates, levy local taxes, and be separately represented at foreign courts; but the whole conduct of foreign affairs, the raising and control of the army, the decision of peace and war were to rest with the president. The executive was vested in the King of Prussia as hereditary president, assisted by a federal chancellor. The Legislature was to consist of (i) a Bundesrat, or federal council, composed of plenipotentiaries from the confederate states, and (ii) a Reichstag, elected by universal manhood suffrage. Military service was to be compulsory throughout the Confederation.

The first official act of the president was the appointment of Bismarck as chancellor of the Confederation. And most significantly; for the chancellor was the keystone of the new constitutional arch. Of that new constitution a most acute analysis is contained in a memorandum written in 1868 by Mr. (afterwards Sir Robert) Morier, then British minister at Darmstadt, for the instruction of his chief, Lord Stanley.[1] The North German Confederation must, according to him,

[1] Cf. Morier's *Memoirs*, i. 111 seq. The memorandum was annotated by E. von Stockmar, and is coloured by the anti-Bismarckian sentiments of both Morier and Stockmar.

be regarded as a compromise, essentially artificial, between the ideas of 'Great Prussianism and Little Germanism'; but the legislative centre is clearly in the North German and not in the Prussian parliament. So strong, however, is the prestige of the Prussian crown that the parliamentary majority, 'except so far as it can come to terms with Bismarck, feels itself impotent'. The power of the president, though considerable even on paper, is really derived from the association of the presidency with the crown of Prussia, and still more from the personality of the first chancellor. Here is 'the moving spring, the *cheville ouvrière*, which keeps the machinery moving. . . . The various functions of the federal organ remained in the text of the Federal Constitution more or less in blank; but it was left to the author of the original scheme to define and establish what, in practice, these functions should be'. Thus all the more important functions of the Confederacy were gradually concentrated in the hands of the all-powerful chancellor.

Morier's analysis was to some extent coloured by his anti-Bismarckian prejudices. But it is, in the main, as accurate as it is acute. Prussia had not merged itself in Germany. North Germany, on the contrary, was absorbed into Prussia.

This fact explains the facility with which, four years later, the North German Confederation was expanded and transformed into the German Empire. Towards that consummation Bismarck had been working ever since he had appreciated at Frankfort the futility of the old Bund and had probed the depths of Austrian hostility to Prussia. Only one thing was now needed to complete

the edifice of unity. Bismarck sought and found it in a successful war with France.

For further reference:

HERTSLET, *Map of Europe by Treaty*; MOWAT, *Select Treaties and Documents*; *Parliamentary Papers* (Schleswig-Holstein, 1860–62); (Denmark and Germany), 1864; HORST KOHL, *Bismarck-Regesten* and *Bismarck-Jahrbuch*; *Bismarck: The Man and the Statesman* (Eng. tr. by A. J. Butler and others); BISMARCK, *Reflections and Reminiscences* (written in old age; but invaluable); HEADLAM, *Bismarck*; LORD SALISBURY, *Essays, Political and Biographical* (for Schleswig-Holstein); MALET, *Overthrow of the Germanic Confederation* (with large citations from the documents); DAY, *Russian Government in Poland* (with texts of documents); WEMYSS, *Memoirs and Letters of Sir Robert Morier*; BUSCH, *Our Chancellor* (and other works on Bismarck); KLACZKO, *Two Chancellors*. See also references to Chapters XII and XIII.

CHAPTER XII

THE UNIFICATION OF GERMANY

The Franco-German War. The German Empire

'It is France which has been conquered at Sadowa.' Marshal Randon's words reflected the sentiment not merely of the French politicians, but of the French people. Nor was their instinct at fault. Down to 1866 France had been for at least two hundred years undisputed queen of the Continent. Her supremacy was now threatened by the Prussian parvenu. France and Sadowa.

Bismarck was as keenly alive as his enemies to the facts of a new situation. The Seven Weeks' War had hardly ended when he avowed his belief that a war with France 'lay in the logic of history'. That logic Bismarck had no mind to thwart. He was convinced that France would never permit the aggrandizement of Prussia, and the unification of Germany, without an effort, backed, if necessary, by war, to secure adequate 'compensation'.

The Emperor of the French could not, indeed, afford another diplomatic defeat. Things had, of late, gone badly with that brilliant adventurer. The Italian war of 1859 had given France Savoy and Nice; but the French Ultramontanes were disposed to think the price too high. They could not view without grave concern the envelopment of the states of the Church by the new Napoleon III and Bismarck.

kingdom of Italy. And Napoleon's domestic position—in more than one sense—was increasingly dependent upon the support of the Clericals. The popularity of the 'Liberal Empire' was rapidly waning; the Cobden Treaty was distasteful to the manufacturers; vast expenditure was beginning to tell even upon thrifty France; whispers of wholesale corruption grew louder and more frequent; worst of all, Napoleon's health was failing, and the future of the dynasty was precarious.

Decay of French prestige.

Abroad, too, the Empire of the later 'sixties was not the Empire which had emerged with brilliantly enhanced prestige from the wars with Russia and with Austria. The Polish insurrection of 1863, Bismarck's opportunity, was the first step in the downfall of Napoleon. His remonstrance to Russia brought no credit to himself, and no advantage to the Poles. There followed immediately the question of Schleswig-Holstein. Out of that tangled business France came as badly as England. Bismarck trampled on both. Upon the failure to succour either Poles or Danes, there had supervened the ghastly tragedy in Mexico.

Compensations for France, 1866–7.

And now Austria, too, was humbled in the dust at Königgrätz. The rapidity of the Prussian triumph threw Napoleon's diplomacy into confusion. After the Biarritz interview he had figured, in his own imagination, as the magnanimous—but not ill compensated—arbiter. After Königgrätz he was the humble suitor to victorious Prussia.

Even before the preliminaries of Nikolsburg had been signed, Benedetti, the French ambassador to Berlin, had followed Bismarck to the Prussian head-quarters, insistent

to secure a 'compensation' for France. Bismarck put him off with fair words, and quickly made his peace with Austria.

Negotiations were resumed at Berlin, and Benedetti formally demanded Mainz and the Bavarian Palatinate. Bismarck flatly refused, and caused both the French demand and his own refusal to be published in *Le Siècle*. Napoleon dropped the question; but the mischief was done. The first impulse towards the dreaded union of south and north had been given. As soon as Bismarck opened his arms a strong party in Bavaria was ready to jump into them.

The *Projet de Traité*.

Then followed an incident in regard to which we are still without precise information. If Count Benedetti's report may be accepted, Bismarck, while refusing to cede any part of western Germany to France, suggested that Napoleon might like to help himself to Luxemburg, and even Belgium, in return for his recognition of the union of North and South Germany. This was, in fact, the basis of the famous *Projet de Traité* which Bismarck sent to *The Times*, and which appeared there on July 25, 1870, on the eve of the Franco-German War. France was to agree to recognize a federal union between all the German states except Austria, and in return Prussia was to facilitate the purchase of Luxemburg by France from the King of the Netherlands, and was, further, in case Napoleon should 'be drawn by circumstances to send troops into Belgium or to conquer it', to assist him, with the whole of his land and sea forces, against any Power who should declare war upon him.

Bismarck's motive in publishing the 'Project', and at

that precise moment, is not ambiguous. He counted upon it to alienate English sympathy from France.

The Times, inspired from Berlin, pointed out that the proposal had obviously proceeded from France. Benedetti, the Duc de Gramont, and the emperor promptly repudiated Bismarck's version and declared that the terms of the *Projet de Traité* had been dictated by Bismarck to Benedetti, and that when the latter communicated them to Paris the emperor immediately refused to entertain the proposal.

The precise truth may never perhaps be ascertained. The draft was admittedly in Benedetti's handwriting, and was written on the paper of the French embassy. There can be no doubt that Bismarck would have been delighted to see Napoleon make a grab at Belgium. Whether he would have allowed him to keep it is another matter. It is not impossible that he might have done so, in return for the recognition of a German empire, and the annexation thereto of Holland and Alsace-Lorraine.[1]

Meanwhile Bismarck had made Prussia's position doubly secure. He had concluded the Treaty of Prague with Austria; he had satisfied Alexander of Russia; he had closed the 'period of conflict' in the Prussian Parliament, and had fortified his own political position by a bill of indemnity; and, finally, he had concluded an offensive and defensive alliance with the four South German states. Under the terms of this treaty Prussia guaranteed their territorial integrity, while they agreed to support Prussia if attacked, and to put their forces under the command of the King of Prussia.

[1] See Morier, II, chaps. xxiii, xxiv, xxv

Germany was now all but 'made'. In 1867 another stage in the process was registered by the organization of a tariff-parliament in Berlin. For fiscal purposes the southern states were to send their deputies and representatives to join with those of the North German Confederation in a *Zollbundesrat* and a *Zollparlament*. Reorganization of the Zollverein.

The relations with France, however, were still unsettled. Thwarted in his desire for a Rhine province, doubtful as to Belgium, Napoleon in 1867 fell back upon a request for 'the road to Brussels, in default Belgium itself'. The Grand Duchy of Luxemburg occupied an anomalous position in the European economy. In 1815 it had been assigned to the King of the Netherlands in return for the Orange dominions in Germany, the latter being annexed to Prussia. As Grand Duke of Luxemburg the king was a member of the German Confederation. When Belgium revolted against its union with Holland in 1830, Luxemburg threw in its lot with Belgium. A period of confusion followed, but by the Treaty of London (1839) the larger part of Luxemburg was retained by Belgium, the smaller was restored to Holland. The capital of the grand duchy, the city of Luxemburg, had ever since 1815 been garrisoned by Prussia. In January 1867 a bargain was concluded between France and the Netherlands. The latter agreed to sell Luxemburg to Napoleon, provided Prussia would withdraw his garrison from the capital. The King of Prussia assented to this condition, but in March Bismarck, genuinely alarmed by demonstrations of popular disapproval, repented, and vetoed the conclusion of the transaction. War would have broken out, but neither Napoleon nor Bismarck was quite ready, and Luxemburg.

they agreed, therefore, to refer the question to a Conference in London, where, in May 1867, a solution of the problem was arrived at. Under the Treaty of London the grand duchy was retained by the Netherlands; but its perpetual neutrality was guaranteed by Great Britain, Austria, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Prussia, and Russia. The fortifications of Luxemburg were to be destroyed, the Prussian garrison was to be withdrawn, and the grand duke understood that no military establishment should be maintained or created.

The compromise was a reasonable one, and the conditions were observed by the contending parties until 1914, when the neutrality of Luxemburg, like that of Belgium, was violated by Prussia. For the time being the peace of Europe seemed to be assured, and during the summer Paris was *en fête* for the Great Exhibition of 1867. Among the guests of the emperor was the King of Prussia, who brought with him his chancellor. To Bismarck the emperor showed particular attention, and did him the honour of consulting him on problems of domestic politics. The next meeting of the two men was when Napoleon surrendered his sword after Sedan.

Napoleon's diplomacy.

Despite the exchange of courtesies the relations of France and Prussia became steadily worse during the next three years. Bismarck had no desire to force the pace. On the contrary, he had plenty to do in the assimilation of the states lately annexed to Prussia, and in getting the new federal constitution into working order. The reorganization of the federal army on Prussian lines was, in itself, a task of sufficient magnitude. Time was needed, also, to bring the southern states more completely

into line with the northern. In fine, Bismarck had everything to gain by hastening slowly.

Consequently when, early in 1870, the Grand Duke of Baden, himself a son-in-law of King William of Prussia, made formal application to be admitted into the North German Confederation Bismarck deemed it prudent to refuse. He frankly told the leaders of the national party that 'to concede their most moderate wishes was to declare war on France'. That war could not, indeed, be indefinitely postponed. The situation is thus analysed by a close and very competent observer: 'Things had got to that pass in Germany that the work of union must be proceeded with *coûte que coûte*, or the work of 1866 fall to pieces, but every one felt that to proceed with the work of unification meant war with France.'[1] Still, Bismarck could bide his time.

With Napoleon it was otherwise. Every day made his position relatively worse. His health was failing rapidly. The French birth-rate was declining; that of Germany rising: Germany was getting 58,000 recruits more per annum than France. Feverishly Napoleon set to work to form alliances for the inevitable war. Negotiations were opened with Russia, with Italy, with Austria. But Russia was already engaged to Prussia, and in regard both to Austria and Italy Rome was still the stumbling-block. But in June 1870 Lebrun was sent on a secret mission to Vienna, and an understanding was reached. France was to march on Kehl, make for the heart of Bavaria, and proclaim the liberation of South Germany from the yoke of Prussia. The French fleet was to threaten Lübeck and

[1] Morier, II, 217, January 5, 1870.

Stettin, and detain the Prussian army in the north; then, three weeks after France had taken the field, Austria was to come in and put 80,000 men on the Bohemian frontier. Such was the plan; but no treaty was actually concluded. When the storm actually burst, therefore, France was without an ally in Europe.

The Hohenzollern candidature in Spain.

Bismarck, not less convinced than Napoleon that the struggle was inevitable, was supremely anxious that France should appear as the aggressor. He found or made his opportunity in the Spanish Succession question. In 1868 the Spaniards deposed their disreputable Queen Isabella, and General Prim looked out for a successor. The throne was declined by the Duke of Genoa, nephew of Victor Emmanuel, and by others to whom it was offered. Bismarck thereupon procured the offer of it to Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, a cadet of the Prussian House, but even more closely connected with the Bonapartes. The latter fact particularly commended the candidature to Bismarck's master, who was entirely guileless in this matter. As to Bismarck's complicity there can be no question. Lord Acton has proved the accusation to the hilt. Prince Leopold twice declined the crown in 1869. In 1870 £50,000 of Prussian bonds found their way to Madrid.[1] The offer was renewed, and on July 4, 1870, was accepted.

Émile Ollivier, who in January 1870 had become prime minister of France, shrank from war; so did the emperor. But there were two people in France who did not: the empress and the Duc de Gramont. Their counsels

[1] Acton, *Historical Essays*. Lord Acton (p. 124) knew the banker through whose hands they passed.

prevailed, and, on July 6, formal intimation, couched in provocative terms, was sent to Prussia, declaring that the accession of a Hohenzollern to the throne of Spain would be regarded by France as a *casus belli*. Bismarck was triumphant; he had now only one obstacle to fear: the honesty and candour of his own sovereign. Secretly, King William counselled the withdrawal of Prince Leopold. On July 12 the prince revoked his acceptance of the crown. The French were hilarious. *La Prusse cane* was the comment of their press. Bismarck was in despair; the diplomatic structure, constructed with infinite patience and pains, was like to fall about his ears; he decided to resign. 'I was very much depressed,' he writes, 'for I saw no means of repairing the corroding injury I dreaded to our national position from a timorous policy, unless by picking quarrels clumsily and seeking them artificially.' [1]

The Ems telegram

Bismarck's luck, however, did not desert him at this supreme hour of his country's fate. France had won a great victory over Prussia. With egregious folly she now determined to add to defeat humiliation. The Duc de Gramont telegraphed to Benedetti, who had followed King William to Ems, that simple renunciation was insufficient, and that the king must pledge himself never to allow Prince Leopold's candidature to be revived. The king, conscious of complete straightforwardness, was stung by the insult, and courteously, though with some warmth, refused. The officer in attendance, Abeken, then dispatched to Bismarck the historic 'Ems telegram'.

[1] Cf. for Bismarck's own account of these days, *Reflections and Reminiscences*, ii. 93 seq.

Abeken to Bismarck

Ems, July 13, 1870.
3.40 p.m.

His Majesty writes to me: 'Count Benedetti spoke to me on the promenade, in order to demand from me, finally in a very importunate manner, that I should authorize him to telegraph at once that I bound myself for all future time never again to give my consent if the Hohenzollerns should renew their candidature. I refused at last somewhat sternly, as it is neither right nor possible to undertake engagements of this kind *à tout jamais*. I told him that I had as yet received no news, and as he was earlier informed from Paris and Madrid than myself, he could see clearly that my Government had no more interest in the matter.' His Majesty has since received a letter from Prince Charles Anthony.[1] His Majesty having told Count Benedetti that he was awaiting news from the Prince, has decided, with reference to the above demand, on the suggestion of Count Eulenberg and myself, not to receive Count Benedetti again, but only to let him be informed through an aide-de-camp: 'That his Majesty has now received from the Prince confirmation of the news which Benedetti had already received from Paris, and had nothing further to say to the ambassador.' His Majesty leaves it to your Excellency to decide whether Benedetti's fresh demand and its rejection should be at once communicated both to our ambassadors to foreign nations and to the Press.

On the 13th Roon and Moltke were dining with Bismarck in Berlin. All three were profoundly dejected by the impending resignation of the Chancellor. In the middle of dinner the telegram from Ems arrived.

[1] Father of Prince Leopold.

Bismarck's chance had come. In a few minutes his message was ready for the Press. He read it to his guests. It ran as follows:

After the news of the renunciation of the hereditary Prince of Hohenzollern had been officially communicated to the Imperial Government of France by the Royal Government of Spain, the French Ambassador further demanded of his Majesty, the King, at Ems, that he would authorize him to telegraph to Paris that his Majesty, the King, bound himself for all time never again to give his consent should the Hohenzollerns renew their candidature. His Majesty, the King, thereupon decided not to receive the French Ambassador again, and sent the aide-de-camp on duty to tell him that his Majesty had nothing further to communicate to the ambassador.

Dejection was transformed into jubilation. 'Now', said Moltke, 'it has a different ring; before, it sounded like a parley; now it is like a flourish in answer to a challenge.' Bismarck had deliberately converted acquiescence into defiance. 'It will have the effect of a red rag upon the Gallic bull.' Roon's comment was equally laconic: 'Our God of old lives still, and will not let us perish in disgrace.'

As far as Prussia was concerned the die was cast. In Paris there was the wildest excitement among the populace; in the Cabinet there was still justifiable hesitation. For two days the issues of peace and war hung in the balance. It was Morier's deliberate opinion that one Power only could have averted war. But English foreign policy was at the lowest ebb of ineptitude. Lord Clarendon, to the infinite loss of Europe, had died on June 27, 'in the very act' of trying to bring about disarmament.

'Never in my life', said Bismarck to Lady Emily Russell, 'was I more glad to hear of anything than I was to hear of your father's death . . . he would have prevented the war.' For once Bismarck was more polite than accurate. Truly the war lay in the logic of history. Clarendon might have postponed it; Granville and Gladstone conspicuously failed to do so. Napoleon would gladly have yielded to the slightest pressure. Gramont and the Empress, it is true, were bent upon war; but it was carried in the Cabinet only by one vote. On July 19 the French declaration reached Berlin.

The Franco-German War.

The one chance for France would have been a dash into South Germany. But on July 20 Bavaria decided to join Prussia; the cohesion between South and North was complete; 150,000 men were thus added to the troops at Moltke's disposal, and the back door into Germany was slammed in the face of France. Bismarck had squared the Tzar Alexander by the hint that this would be the convenient opportunity for tearing up the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of Paris. Russia, therefore, made it known that she would protect Prussia's flank on the side of Austria. France was without a friend.

Within three weeks from the French declaration of war the Prussian preparations were completed. On August 2 the war began: precisely a month later the first stage of it was over. Roon put over 500,000 men into the field, and had another 500,000 in reserve. The Prussian organization was superb, and carried everything before it. The French troops fought with their accustomed gallantry, but generals, commissariat, transport

were all lacking, and the end was never doubtful. The Germans advanced in three armies. The first under Steinmetz, 102,000 strong, concentrated on Coblenz and marched up the Moselle on Metz; the second, consisting of 244,800 men commanded by Prince Frederick Charles (the 'Red Prince'), moved from Mainz also on Metz; the third, under the Crown Prince of Prussia, 220,400 strong, moved from Mannheim on Strasburg. On August 4 the Crown Prince drove in Marshal MacMahon's advance guard at Weissenburg, and two days later inflicted a crushing and costly defeat upon the main army at Wörth, compelling MacMahon to retreat in disorder upon Châlons. On the same day (August 6) Prince Frederick Charles and Steinmetz stormed the heights of Spicheren, held by General Frossard, who was left unsupported by Bazaine, and compelled 'the army of the Rhine' under the emperor himself to fall back on Metz. The emperor resigned the command to Bazaine, and joined MacMahon and the army of Alsace. By a series of brilliant though dangerous manœuvres the first and second German armies got between Metz and Paris, and after two battles (August 14, 16) culminating in the bloody conflict at Gravelotte (August 18) Bazaine made the fatal blunder of letting himself be shut up with 180,000 of the pick of the French army in Metz. MacMahon with the army of Alsace was now ordered, against his own judgement, to advance from Châlons to the rescue of Bazaine. The Crown Prince, with the third German army, caught him and surrounded a fine French army of 130,000 men at Sedan. On September 2, after desperate fighting, Napoleon surrendered to the King of

Sedan.

Prussia. The emperor himself, with 80,000 Frenchmen, became prisoners of war.

Fall of the Second Empire.

Sedan brought the Second Empire with a crash to the ground. The empress fled with the Prince Imperial to England; the emperor was deposed, and the Republic was proclaimed (September 4). A 'Government of National Defence', including Gambetta, Jules Favre, and General Trochu, the Governor of Paris, was hastily set up, and Thiers started off on a mission to the great Powers to persuade them to mediate on behalf of France. His mission achieved no success, but Bismarck was seriously alarmed. On September 19 he met Jules Favre at the Château de Ferrières, but Bismarck was not a public meeting or even a Senate, and Favre's eloquence left him quite unmoved. Bismarck would not grant an armistice, even for the election of a National Assembly, unless France would cede Alsace and part of Lorraine immediately. Favre on his side had sent a note to the Powers declaring that the Government would not 'yield an inch of French soil, nor a stone of French fortresses'.

Siege of Paris.

Within three weeks after the surrender at Sedan, Paris was invested by the Crown Prince. As the autumn wore on Bismarck became impatient of the slow progress of the siege, fearing 'the possibility of an European intervention'.[1] Yet on every hand the German arms were successful. Gambetta escaped from Paris in a balloon on October 7, and, with immense energy, organized the national defence. But on October 11 the Germans defeated the army of the Loire and occupied Orleans. On the eastern front things were going equally badly

[1] *Reminiscences*, ii. 119.

for the French. Strasburg, after a splendid resistance, was compelled to surrender on September 28, and, just a month later, the great fortress of Metz, with 150,000 men and immense stores, was delivered up to the enemy by the shameful pusillanimity if not the actual treachery of Marshal Bazaine. These disasters served only to redouble the energy of Gambetta and to reinvigorate the determination of France. Orleans was retaken (November 9), and the army of the Loire, after some success in the open, made a desperate attempt to relieve Paris. But, notwithstanding all the efforts of the French, the Germans gradually closed in upon the capital, and on January 28, 1871, Paris capitulated.

Treaty of Frankfort.

An armistice was then arranged to permit the election of a National Assembly. This met at Bordeaux (February 12), elected Thiers Head of the State, and on February 26 preliminaries of peace were arranged. Thiers was a negotiator whom, unlike Jules Favre, Bismarck could respect. As to Alsace there could be no question. 'Strasburg', said Bismarck, 'is the key of our house, and we must have it.' The case of Lorraine and the great fortress of Metz was different. If Strasburg is the sally-port for France against Germany, Metz is a sally-port for Germany against France. Every argument urged by Bismarck for the cession of Strasburg was an argument for the retention of Metz. And there is reason to believe that Bismarck, if Moltke had not overborne him, would have left Metz in French hands. As it was, the utmost Thiers could wring out of him was Belfort, and to get back Belfort he had to submit to the triumphal entry of the German army into Paris. It was worth the price.

By the definitive treaty signed at Frankfort on May 10 France agreed to cede the whole of Alsace except Belfort and eastern Lorraine, together with the fortresses of Metz and Strasburg.[1] The indemnity was fixed at five milliards of francs, and was to be paid within three years. German troops were to remain in occupation of defined French districts until the indemnity was paid.

The new Empire.

Bismarck had not gone to war with France for the sake of Alsace-Lorraine. That a bloody war would some day be fought for them had been predicted by Hardenberg in 1815. Nor did any one doubt that Strasburg would be the forfeit paid by France for the first German victory on French soil. But this was primarily a question for soldiers. Bismarck, in making the war of 1870, had other ends in view. The war was, in his view, necessary to consummate German unity.

In the autumn of 1870 the staff of the Wilhelmstrasse was transferred to Versailles, and there, in the great palace of Louis XIV, the final stages in the building of a stupendous political edifice were completed. Baden, as we have seen, was only too anxious to join the North German Confederation. Bavaria was much more tenacious of its independence, and ultimately came in only on the understanding that certain rights (*Sonderrechte*) were to be strictly reserved to it. The King of Bavaria still commands his army in time of peace; Bavaria has, by the constitution, a permanent place upon those standing committees of the Bundesrat which deal with foreign affairs and the army respectively; it controls its own

The Sonderrechte.

[1] For discussion of the problem of Alsace-Lorraine, see *supra*, pp. 260 seq.

railway, post, and telegraphic systems; it retains its own laws in regard to marriage and citizenship; it is exempt from imperial excise on brandy and beer and enjoys the right to levy its own excise on these articles.[1] Würtemberg came in on similar terms, and by November 1870 the difficult diplomatic work was done. 'The unity of Germany', said Bismarck, 'is completed, and with it Kaiser and Reich.'

The imperial title.

As to the title of *Kaiser* there was considerable difference of opinion. Bismarck laid great stress upon the assumption of the imperial title; he regarded it, indeed, as 'a political necessity'. Still more did the Crown Prince of Prussia, whose views were even more unitary than those of the Chancellor. The older Prussian nobility and the king himself were, on the contrary, averse from the change. The southern kings would, however, brook no superior. It was agreed, therefore, that the Prussian king should become, not Emperor of Germany or of the Germans, but *Kaiser in Deutschland*—German Emperor.

This title King William agreed to accept from his brother sovereigns in Germany,[2] and by this title he was acclaimed in the Hall of Mirrors in the Palace of Versailles on January 18, 1871. It was 170 years to a day since Frederick, Elector of Brandenburg, had assumed at Königsberg the kingly crown of Prussia. That the final act in the evolution of a long drama should have been played at Versailles is a fact not lacking in dramatic irony.

[1] Cf. Junon, *La Bavière et l'Empire allemand* (*Annales de l'École Libre des Sciences politiques*, 1892), quoted ap. Lowell.

[2] The offer was actually conveyed in a letter (drafted by Bismarck) from King Ludwig of Bavaria.

The German constitution of 1871.

The *Instrument* of the new constitution was laid before the Reichstag on April 14, 1871, and was formally promulgated on April 16. It is based upon (i) the constitution, as amended, of the North German Confederation, and (ii) the Treaties of November 15, 23, and 25 between that confederation and the southern states.

The constitution of the North German Confederation was adapted, without difficulty, to the new conditions.

The Kaiser.

The Kaiser's position is constitutionally a peculiar one. He is not strictly an hereditary sovereign. He is not indeed 'sovereign' at all. Article xi states: 'The presidency of the union belongs to the King of Prussia who, in this capacity, shall be entitled German Emperor.' There is no German crown, no German civil-list; the 'sovereignty' is vested in the aggregate of the German governments as represented in the Bundesrat. In the Bundesrat Prussia is all powerful, and through the Bundesrat the King of Prussia technically exercises his rights as German Emperor. No provision is made in the constitution for succession to the Empire; and naturally, since the Empire must follow the rule of the Prussian kingdom. The Emperor enjoys the threefold position which attached to the President of the North German Confederation: Bundespräsidium, Bundesfeldherr, and King of Prussia; he represents the Empire in relation to foreign powers and to the constituent states; he controls, with the aid of a committee of the Bundesrat, foreign affairs; concludes alliances; receives foreign envoys; declares war, and makes peace; but for every declaration of an offensive war the consent of the Bundesrat is essential. To him it belongs to summon

and adjourn the Legislature and, with the consent of the Bundesrat, to dissolve the Reichstag; to levy federal execution upon any recalcitrant state; and to promulgate and execute the laws of the Empire.

The Chancellor.

The executive is vested in the Emperor and the *Reichskanzler* whom he appoints. The Chancellor is the only federal Minister, but was subsequently assisted in his work by a number of subordinate officials, such as the Foreign and Colonial Secretaries. Bismarck refused to have a Cabinet, and none exists. The Chancellor is the sole responsible official of the Empire; neither the Bundesrat nor any one else, except the Kaiser, can get rid of him.[1] As Imperial Chancellor he presides in the Bundesrat, but if he votes it must be as the Prussian delegate; as Chancellor he has no vote. In the Reichstag also he has no seat; he sits and speaks there as Prussian delegate to the Bundesrat.

On its administrative side the Empire, as equipped by the constitution, was extraordinarily weak. For the execution of federal laws it has to depend upon state officials. Only in foreign affairs and in military and naval matters does it exercise effective control. In legislation, on the other hand, it is all powerful.

The Legislature.

The Legislature consists of (i) the Bundesrat or Imperial Council, and (ii) the Reichstag.[2] The latter has very little real power. It is elected for five years by universal

[1] The position of the executive was not legally affected by the Bülow incident of 1908.

[2] Whether the Imperial Legislature is technically bi-cameral or uni-cameral is a moot point, for discussion of which cp. Marriott, *Second Chambers*, pp. 116 seq.

manhood suffrage. It has a veto on legislation and, constitutionally, the right of initiative. But, as a fact, legislation, including the annual budget, originates as a rule in the Bundesrat. In practice, the members of the Reichstag exercise the right to interpellate the executive, but no such right is guaranteed under the constitution.

The Bundesrat.

Far more extensive, at any rate on paper, are the powers of the Bundesrat. Of all the federal institutions of modern Germany this is the most interesting, and in some respects the most important. An American commentator has described it as 'the central and characteristic organ of the Empire'.[1] Like the American Senate, it represents not the people of the Empire, but the states. Unlike the American Senate, however, it represents them unequally. Out of sixty-one votes, Prussia claims seventeen in her own right; Bavaria six; Saxony and Würtemberg four each; Baden and Hesse three; and the rest one apiece. The delegates vote according to instructions from their respective governments, and the vote of the state must be solid; it may actually be given by a single delegate whose vote is raised to the power of the state representation.[2] In matters which concern particular states, only the states immediately interested may vote. Business is transacted in twelve committees; on each of which at least four states, besides Prussia, must be represented.

Its functions are legislative, executive, and judicial.

In regard to most legislation it has both the first and

[1] President Woodrow Wilson.

[2] Thus a single Bavarian delegate may give *six* votes.

the last word. It fixes the Imperial Budget, and audits the accounts between the Empire and the states, and it supervises the collection of customs and revenue generally. It has the power, with the Emperor, of declaring war, of dissolving the Reichstag, and has a voice in the conclusion of treaties and the appointment of judges of the Supreme Court and other officials.

In many respects it acts as an administrative court; it has the right, by issuing ordinances, to remedy defects in legislation; it acts as Supreme Court of Appeal from the state courts, and decides points of controversy between state and state, and between the Imperial Government and an individual state. No revision of the constitution can take place if fourteen negative votes are cast against the amendment in the Bundesrat. Thus any constitutional amendment can be defeated by Prussia alone; or by the combined vote of the middle states; or by the vote of the single-member states, acting with tolerable unanimity.

The nominal powers of the Bundesrat are, then, enormous: but it is a debatable point how far the practice corresponds with the theory. According to one view it is the most important body in the Empire; according to the other it is a mere nullity. Both views, says President Lowell, are true. 'It is a nullity if regarded as an independent Council, for its impulse is from without. Yet it is the most important organ in the Empire, being the instrument by which the larger states (especially Prussia) rule the Empire.' [1]

In the federal judiciary the Bundesrat, as we have seen, has an important place. Apart from it there is one

The judiciary.

[1] Op. cit., i. 272.

great Federal Supreme Court, which was not created until 1877, the Reichsgericht. It exercises original jurisdiction in cases of treason, and it is a court of appeal on points of imperial law from the state courts. It would seem, however, to lack the supremely important function assigned to the Supreme Court of the United States, for it has no power to decide whether an Act of the Legislature is or is not 'constitutional'. The matter is not quite free from ambiguity; but the best opinion inclines to the view that the German Reichsgericht cannot, in any sufficient sense, be said to act as an interpreter of the constitution.

Such a court is an essential attribute of true federalism. The German constitution falls, then, in this and other respects, very far short of the genuine federal type. In legislation the power of the Central Government is almost unitarian; its competence greatly exceeds that of the American Congress. In administration the central authority is conspicuously weak. Again, German federalism is not based upon the equality of the component states, but presupposes marked inequality. Nowhere is this characteristic more clearly revealed than in the contrast between the composition of the Bundesrat and that of the United States Senate or the Australian Commonwealth. Finally, no provision has, as we have seen, been made for an authoritative interpretation of the constitution external to and independent of the Legislature, which here, as in England, is the judge in its own case.

The truth is, as the events to be disclosed in the next chapter will prove, that Prussia, instead of being,

as in 1849 she well might have been, lost in Germany, has to a large extent absorbed all Germany, save the Teutonic portions of the Austrian Empire. That in the process much has been lost that the world would fain have preserved must be obvious to any one who recalls the characteristic products of the German particularism of the eighteenth century. The Prussian sword is a sorry substitute for the songs of Schubert and the superb harmonies of the Ninth Symphony. Yet the Germany of that day lacked something. It possessed no guarantee for permanent political independence. The French Empire in Germany, established by Napoleon, might well have been succeeded by the domination of the Slav. Some guarantee it was bound in mere self-defence to obtain. But whence and how? 'The Gordian knot of German circumstance', wrote Bismarck, 'could only be cut by the sword; it came to this: that the King of Prussia . . . and with him the Prussian army, must be gained for the national cause. . . . The German's love of Fatherland has need of a prince on whom it can concentrate its attachment. . . . Dynastic interests are justified in Germany so far as they fit in with the common national imperial interests.'

That final identification was the work of Bismarck, aided by the technical genius of Roon and Moltke, and supported, though not without wavering, by his honest, simple-minded, and courageous sovereign. Bismarck's work was embodied in the unifying constitution of 1871. That constitution was in itself a negation of the divisions and jealousies, the provincial particularism, the petty-state individualism, which were the political

products of many centuries of history. Much still remained to be done, but at last the German folk had realized under Prussian leadership their national unity and national identity.

For further reference:

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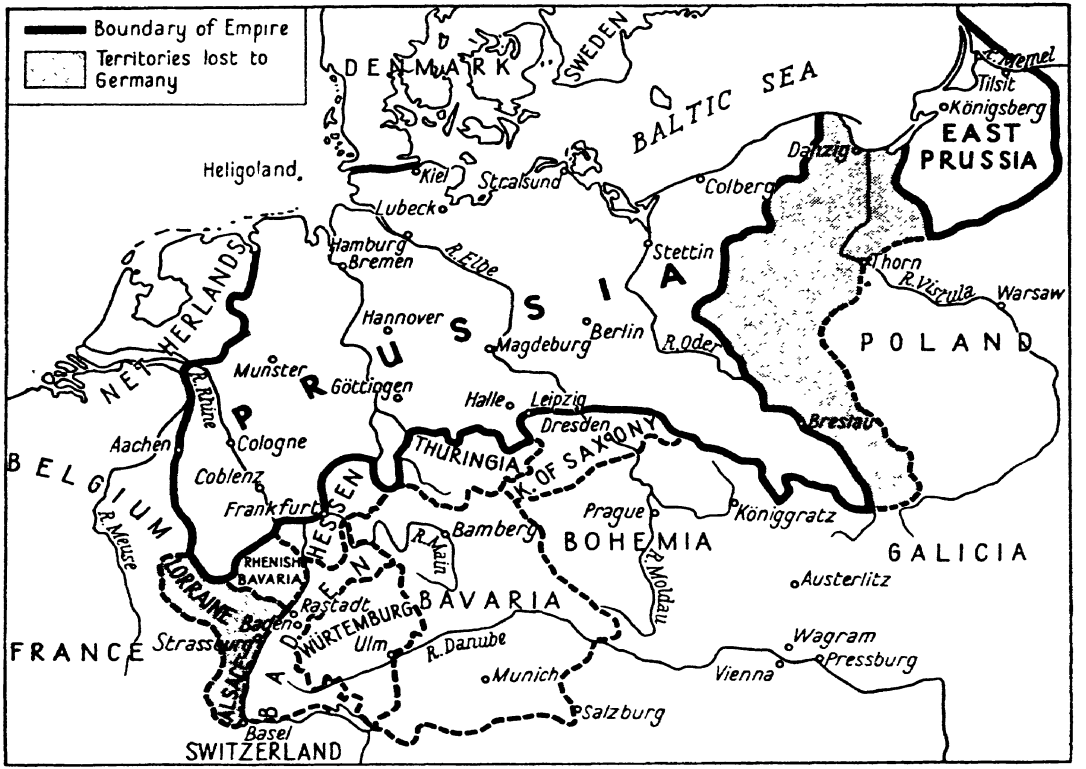
CHAPTER XIII

BISMARCK, THE IMPERIAL CHANCELLOR, 1871–90

The period 1871–90.

THE nineteen years from the Treaty of Frankfort (May 10, 1871) to the resignation of Bismarck on March 20, 1890, form a single chapter in German and European history, no less than in Bismarck's career as a statesman. They certainly lack the concentrated dramatic interest of the nine years of his Minister-Presidency, from 1862 to 1871, which saw the crushing of one empire, the Austrian, and the tragic collapse of another, the French Empire of Napoleon III; which revealed to an astonished world the military triumphs of Königgrätz, Gravelotte, and Sedan; which witnessed the Russian Empire tearing up, with the meek acquiescence of Great Britain, one of the vital clauses of the Treaty of Paris of 1856, and the completion of the unification of Italy with the entry of the Italian troops into Rome (September 20, 1871). Still, the nineteen years that followed the Franco-German War have a deep and sustained historical significance of their own. They established the success of the new German Empire and its constitution beyond all question; they laid broad and deep the foundation of German ascendancy on the continent of Europe; they paved the way, provided the resources, and inspired the heightening ambitions and ideals of the German World-power (*Weltmacht*) and


Boundary of Empire
Territories lost to Germany
DENMARK
SWEDEN
BALTIC SEA
Memel
Tilsit
Königsberg
EAST PRUSSIA
Danzig
Colberg
Heligoland
Kiel
Stralsund
Lubeck
Hamburg
Bremen
R. Elbe
Stettin
Thorn
R. Vistula
Warsaw
POLAND
NETHERLANDS
PRUSSIA
Hannover
Magdeburg
Berlin
R. Oder
Munster
Göttingen
Halle
Leipzig
Dresden
Breslau
R. Rhine
Aachen
Cologne
THURINGIA
K. OF SAXONY
BELGIUM
Coblenz
Frankfurt
Prague
Königgratz
R. Meuse
HESSEN
Bamberg
BOHEMIA
GALICIA
LORRAINE
RHENISH BAVARIA
R. Main
R. Moldau
Austerlitz
Rastadt
Baden
BAVARIA
WÜRTEMBURG
Wagram
FRANCE
Strassburg
ALSACE
Ulm
R. Danube
Pressburg
Munich
Vienna
Salzburg
Basel
SWITZERLAND

of the World-Policy (*Weltpolitik*) which characterizes the epoch that opened with the accession of William II in 1888. They also are the years indispensable for a study and judgement of Bismarck, the man and the statesman.

The problems of this epoch, both in a shifting European situation and in the domestic and internal evolution, called for the highest gifts of statecraft, and these problems were complicated by economic changes, equivalent to an economic revolution. The industrial revolution in Great Britain from 1770 to 1830 altered the character of the British state and its outlook on life as well as in its principles of policy. Between 1870 and 1900 Germany passed through a similar industrialization, the results of which were more immediate because they affected a larger population and were compressed into a shorter period of time. Bismarck recognized the revolution that had taken place, as Prince von Bülow records, when, not long before his death, he visited Hamburg and saw all round him the irrefutable evidence of an industrialized imperial Germany. 'I am stirred and moved,' he said at last. 'Yes, this is a new age, a new world.'

The industrial revolution.

A few figures will summarize the magnitude of the transformation. In 1871 the population of the German Empire was 41,000,000; in 1890 it was 49,500,000; in 1900, 56,250,000. The birth-rate from 1861 to 1870 was 37·2 per 1,000 inhabitants, from 1871 to 1880 it was 39·1 (reaching its maximum in 1876, viz. 41·00), from 1881 to 1890, 36·8, and from 1891 to 1900, 36·2, comparing with 35·3 for the ten years from 1851 to 1860. Although there has been a steady and gradual decline since 1900 (to 30·7 in 1910) that does not affect the period under review, and

in 1912 the surplus of births over deaths was 839,887. But even more eloquent of the changes are the figures for the urban and rural population and the evidence afforded by the occupation censuses of 1882, 1895, and 1907. Mr. Dawson points out (*Evolution of Modern Germany*, p. 38):

> In 1871 Germany had eight 'large' towns of over 100,000 inhabitants; in 1880 the number was 14; in 1890 there were 26 such towns; in 1895 the number of 'large' towns increased to 30; in 1900 it was 33, and in 1905 there were 41 towns with over 100,000 inhabitants, of which 11 had over 250,000 inhabitants, and five had over half a million. In the United Kingdom there were, in 1901, 39 towns with a population exceeding 100,000, of which ten had over 250,000 inhabitants, and two had over half a million.

Urban and rural population.

In 1871 the population of Berlin was 800,000; in 1890, 1,578,000; in 1905, 2,040,000; while in 1910 the number of 'large' towns had risen to 48, of which 6 had over half a million, and 17 over a quarter of a million, of inhabitants, while the total population had risen to just short of 65,000,000. Between 1871 and 1900 the ratio of urban (i.e. living in towns of upwards of 5,000 inhabitants) to rural population was completely altered. In 1871 the percentage of urban inhabitants was 23·7, of rural 76·3; in 1890, 32·2 and 67·8 respectively; in 1900, 42·26 and 57·74; and in 1910, 48·8 and 51·2 respectively. In other words, between 1871 and 1900 the urban population increased by 18·56 per cent., and the rural population decreased by 18·25 per cent. The statistics of the occupation censuses of 1882 and 1895 reinforce these results.

Prior to 1882 accurate figures are not obtainable, but it has been calculated that in 1871 about 60 per cent. of the population earning a livelihood were engaged in agriculture and kindred occupations and 40 per cent. in industry, trade, and commerce. In 1882 the 60 per cent. had fallen to 42·5, and in 1895 to 37·5. In the thirteen years between 1882 and 1895, in spite of the great increase in population, the total increase of persons employed in agriculture was only 56,206, while the increase of those employed in industry and mining was 1,884,755, and in trade and transport was 768,193, a combined total of 2,652,948, or an absolute increase almost fifty times as great. And the occupation census of 1907 shows that broadly 9,750,000 of the population were engaged in 'agriculture', while 14,750,000 were engaged in industry, mining, trade, and commerce—a complete reversal of the distribution obtaining in 1871. Figures such as these, the full analysis of which would fill a volume, are required to explain many points in modern German history, and without some such statistical framework the growth of Social Democracy as a political and economic force in German life would be absolutely unintelligible.

Foreign trade.

The statistics of foreign trade tell the same tale. In 1880 the imports were valued at £141,000,000, the exports at £144,800,000—interesting figures, for in that year Germany was still a debtor country, exporting more than she imported. By 1907 the imports were £443,000,000 and the exports £356,000,000. Apart from the gigantic increases, piled up steadily with every decade after 1880, Germany was now a creditor country, balancing the

excess of her imports by her invisible exports, interest on capital invested abroad, and profits of her shipping, &c. The advance of that shipping has been as remarkable as other advances. In 1871 German shipping was 892,000 tons, and her share of the mercantile marine of the world was 5·2 per cent.; in 1905 she had 2,200,000 tons of shipping, representing 9·9 per cent. of the world's mercantile marine. In 1913 the tonnage had risen to over 5,000,000 tons, and Germany had the second place in the shipping of the world. Furthermore, analysis of the trade returns between 1870 and 1890, and increasingly so after 1890, proves four significant conclusions: first, the rapid increase in the import of raw materials for industry; secondly, the steady increase in the export of manufactured goods; thirdly, the relative decrease in the ratio of imported manufactured goods to the export of such, and further, the steady increase in the import of food, luxuries, and cattle. With every decade after 1870 Germany has become more and more a workshop of the world, less and less able to feed her increasing population from her own resources, more and more dependent on the import of raw materials for her industries, more and more dependent on keeping and opening up foreign markets for her exports, and spheres of investment for her capital. Dr. Rohrbach already in 1903 emphasized the bearing of these data on German policy. A yearly increase of population of 800,000 demanded answers to these questions: Where will this population live? How will it be employed? How will it be fed? and these were problems for German statesmanship to solve, by its foreign and home policy.

'Political questions are questions of power,' said Bismarck. The political significance of the industrialization of Germany is most easily grasped if we remember that the increase in trade provided a large increase in revenue and in taxable capacity, that the increase in population provided the numbers as well as the resources for an expanding army and the creation of a navy, that Germany's shipping gave her a widening interest in, and need of, sea power, that her dependence on the import of raw materials and on foreign markets for her exports stimulated the demand for 'colonies' and for favourable economic conditions all over the world, while the steady outflow of German capital for investment outside Germany made her economic interests world-wide. 'The power' of which Bismarck and his successors so frequently spoke rested at bottom, as they were well aware, on numbers, wealth, organization, and material resources. But if the industrial revolution brought with it formidable additions to the strength of the German Empire, born in 1871, it also brought with it no less formidable economic, political, and constitutional problems—the increasing struggle between the agricultural interest and classes and the industrial interest and classes, the growth of Social Democracy, the conflict between Capital and Labour, between the capitalistic entrepreneur and the industrial proletariat, the needs and ideals of a town-bred, town-living Germany, the countless grave social and economic difficulties of poverty, unemployment, old age, insurance, wages, standards of living, conditions and hours of employment, the position and status of the female worker, the mother and the child.

Political and economic significance of the economic changes.

Bismarck's task.

These and kindred elements only gradually made themselves felt after 1871, and Bismarck became increasingly conscious of their pressure before he was compelled to give way to the new world and the new generation, heralded by the accession of William II. But in 1871 his policy and acts show that he regarded his immediate task to be, first, to secure by foreign policy the European conditions which would enable the German Empire to establish itself unhindered by jealous or aggressive rivals and neighbours; and, secondly, to work out through the new imperial machinery a constitutional system of internal administration in conformity with his own principles and interpretation of political science. Germany was formally unified in 1871; the constitutional framework had been created; 'blood and iron' had done their work. The heavier duty still remained of accomplishing a true imperial unity, of building up the material fabric, of creating the spiritual, moral, and economic cohesion without which the constitutional framework would be an empty shell, and of providing the supplementary institutions and organization on an imperial basis by which the Empire would anticipate and satisfy the aspirations no less than the workaday life of a united German nation. As the analysis of the constitution in the preceding chapter indicates, Sedan, the scene in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, and the Treaty of Peace with France had only completed the formal unification of Germany. 1871 is the starting-point where the making of an empire on the basis of unification began, and the making of that empire is the last stage in the evolution of Prussia.

In the accomplishment of this task Bismarck could rely on his position as Imperial Chancellor, the confidence of his sovereign, a rich and wide experience of men and affairs, the intellectual gifts, personality, and iron will that had already made history, and the prestige of a wonderful success. It has been pointed out that, as Chancellor, he was not 'responsible' to the Reichstag, and the three years preceding the war of '70 had strengthened his determination to prevent the establishment of parliamentary government in the empire. He peremptorily denied that the Reichstag had any constitutional right or any legal authority to make or unmake chancellors or to require that policy must follow the bidding of a political party with a temporary majority. He took his stand on the position he had laid down in 1862, that as long as he had the confidence of the king-emperor he would retain office, advise the policy that he thought desirable, and secure its execution. Political parties must work with him and not he with political parties; he was not the chief, still less the servant, of any political group; and he was free to choose and to alter his choice as circumstances dictated between the conflicting parties that made up the Reichstag. The union of the two offices of Imperial Chancellor and Minister-President of Prussia complicated but strengthened his claims. For the Imperial Chancellor was an officer independent of the Prussian Diet, and the Prussian Minister-President could not be touched by the imperial Reichstag. Bismarck's position.

No less was Bismarck determined, in conformity with his dominating personality and love of power, to brook neither rivals nor opposition in the sphere The chancellorship.

of government—a determination that grew more and more rigid with every year of life. Foreign affairs he kept in his own hands, but he also asserted continuously his constitutional right, as sole responsible imperial minister, to control the whole imperial administration, and to decide questions of policy, primarily belonging to a specialized department. Thus, when the development of the imperial organization required the differentiation of branches of the imperial executive and the creation of specialized bureaux which divided up the work, in principle belonging to the imperial chancery (*Reichskanzleramt*), Bismarck took care that the 'ministers' for these departments should be either imperial secretaries of state or presidents of executive bureaux, selected by himself and not directly responsible either to the emperor or to the Reichstag for their departments, but working under the supervision of the Imperial Chancellor. Since 1890 the Bismarckian régime has been largely modified and the imperial secretaries have practically become ministerial officers responsible to the Emperor for their several departments, but from 1871 to 1890 Bismarck refused to regard them as colleagues or as ministers proper; they did not form a ministry or cabinet; each was independent of the other, though dependent on the Chancellor, and agreement in their general political views was neither necessary nor desirable. So long as they would work with Bismarck they kept their places. And the retirement of this or that secretary or president generally meant not that the official had changed his mind but that Bismarck was about to change his policy and make the secretary the scapegoat of failure. Bis-

marck's power lay with the German kings and princes, and with the Federal Council (*Bundesrat*), at the working of which, in the absence of specific information, we can only guess; and it was through the initiative or veto of the Bundesrat that he controlled effectually the efforts of the Reichstag to become an organ that made ministers or policy. It is characteristic of the Chancellor's singular parliamentary position that partly from ill health, partly on principle, long periods occurred in which he was absent from Berlin and was never seen in the Reichstag at all. In the last resort Bismarck did not hesitate to offer his resignation. The famous 'Never' that William I wrote in 1877 on one of these formal offers signified truly enough that the king-emperor would not part with his autocratic servant. Hence a threat of resignation was simply an indication that the Chancellor was meeting with opposition and bent on having his own way. William I is credited with meeting these threats with a smiling question, 'Well, and what do you want to-day?' and Bismarck, needless to say, got what he wanted.

Elements of opposition.

But granting that Bismarck's authority came to be unique with his sovereign, with the Bundesrat, and with the German people, the inner history of these twenty years of power reveals an astonishing and persistent opposition, a continuous network of intrigue, recrimination, jealousy, and envenomed tracasseries, inevitable perhaps in a system of personal government (in all of which the Chancellor took a full share), and proves that more than once his position was seriously shaken. Bismarck's Reminiscences, the Memoirs of Prince Hohenlohe, the frank disclosures of his political jackals such as

Busch, his own correspondence and the correspondence of associates like von Roon or of his great political opponents such as Windthorst, Bennigsen, Lasker, Eugen Richter, and August Bebel (to name but a few of the sources available), reveal the political and social world of the governing classes and of the Wilhelmstrasse repellent, frequently unsavoury and sordid, in which the defects of the Chancellor as a man and as a statesman are seen at their worst. His criticism and jealousy of the military chiefs began with 1862 and was chronic throughout the whole of his career, for the army was the one organ of the national life in the machinery of which the king-emperor claimed to be an expert, and in which the great General Staff and its icy chief, von Moltke—the man who could be silent in seven languages—were not prepared to tolerate civil interference or the manipulation of politicians. The army was not, like the navy, an imperial institution. It was not represented in the Reichstag, as the navy came to be, by an imperial secretary of State, at the head of the Reichsmarineamt—an offshoot of the imperial chancellery. Bismarck's function was to provide, so far as the constitution required, the necessary funds and the necessary legislation, determined by the military authorities, and the military administration was preserved for the military chiefs, working through, and taking their commands directly from, the crown as commander-in-chief. The Military Cabinet, the Chief of the General Staff, and the Prussian Minister and Ministry for War were independent of the civil and political control; as organs of the higher command they rested on the unique history and position of the Prussian

army in the evolution of Prussia. If von Moltke could not touch or impair the authority of Bismarck, Bismarck was powerless to impair the authority of von Moltke, who enjoyed a prestige as European in its grandeur and influence as Bismarck's. His remark that attacks on the Prussian army were biting at granite is an unconscious testimony to the place, undisputed and indisputable, that the army occupied in the life and institutions of the empire it had helped to make.

Parliamentary defeats.

Nor did Bismarck always have his way even in the spheres he regarded as peculiarly his own. The *Kulturkampf* ended in a virtual defeat of the Chancellor's policy; the proposal to establish the Supreme Court of Appeal at Leipzig and not at Berlin was carried against Bismarck's expressed wishes; the plan of acquiring all the railways for the empire had to be abandoned, and the bill for transferring the Prussian railways to the imperial authorities was dropped; in 1874 the proposal to make the Army Law permanent was rejected in the Reichstag, and a compromise fixing the numbers for seven years (the Septennat) was only carried with difficulty; the efforts to crush Social Democracy in 1878 by the practical abolition of Parliamentary privileges for members of the Reichstag were defeated; much of the social legislation after 1879 was completely rewritten in consequence of severe and successful criticism and opposition; the plan of a tobacco and brandy State monopoly was contemptuously rejected in 1881. A detailed Parliamentary history of the epoch would in fact show that, apart from foreign policy over which the Reichstag had no control, the great constructive measures of legislation which unified the empire

owed as much to the Reichstag and to Bismarck's administrative 'colleagues' as to the Chancellor.

The Chancellor as a man.

The isolation of the Chancellor certainly impresses a student of these twenty years. It was partly a result of the system and position which since 1867 Bismarck had created for himself—here both the constitution of the North German Confederation and that of the empire were deliberately devised to make the Chancellorship as he conceived it legally effective—and partly due to his own character and temperament. Outside his own domestic circle, with the exception of William I, for whom he had a sincere affection and to whom he gave a service of true devotion, he neither desired nor attempted to make political friends. The friends of his irresponsible Junker days, the allies in Conservative Prussian Junkertum, even von Roon, dropped off or were alienated by political or personal differences. Bismarck could be a bluff and generous host; he was a loyal husband and father; his criticism of life and his wonderful knowledge of great affairs expressed itself in his conversation as in his speeches in the vivid and pregnant phrases, vibrating with the unanalysable force of a man of action who had always revelled in the enjoyment of a full-blooded existence and the consciousness of his own intellectual and physical powers—but beneath this exuberant and boisterous geniality which hypnotized all who came under its spell lay a cold yet passionate, hard, coarse, and self-sufficing nature, insensible to gratitude, charity, pity, remorse, or love. Bismarck demanded of all subjection to his will, surrender of soul and brain to the master. Opposition awoke in him a demonic determination. 'When I have

my enemy in my power I must crush him,' he said. 'Every courtesy,' he remarked on another occasion, 'to an opponent, as far as the gallows.' All opposition, however conscientious, he regarded as personal treachery to himself, neither to be forgiven nor forgotten. His subordinates he treated as instruments to be worn out or broken—it did not matter which—and he exacted from them a slavish dependence. All, high or low, who dared to criticize or 'thwart' drew both his hatred and his vengeance, and any and all means were good for chastisement or humiliation. When we lift the curtain with which the dignity of official history drapes the impressive façade of the Bismarckian régime the interior revealed is the reverse of edifying. Women in particular who had the impertinence to 'interfere in politics', that is to say, whose position, character, or brains entitled them to take an interest in the affairs of their country, to whom Bismarckian principles were repellent, or who desired to weave into the life of Germany a sweetness and light wholly lacking in the ideals of force preached and practised by the statecraft of Prussian Junkertum, women who refused to accept an illiterate and unquestioning obedience as the law of nature, inspired the Chancellor's most brutal and sleepless resentment. His relations with and conduct towards his imperial mistress, the Empress Augusta, the Crown Princess and Empress Frederick, and other ladies was as undignified as it was insolent and ungrateful. The vindictive pettinesses and rancour, the unscrupulous and sordid persecutions revealed in the processes for *Bismarck-beleidigung*—defamation of Bismarck—or against Count Arnim and others—the manipulation of 'the reptile

Press', the use of secret service funds to poison and mislead public opinion, the ingratitude to public servants, the trickery, menaces, and fraud make a pitiable record, which have their counterpart in the public diplomacy and methods of the Chancellor. Odious and indefensible they might well be passed over in silence, were they not characteristic parts of the man and his system, and had they not created and maintained an atmosphere and an interpretation of life in which the making of an empire was accomplished and solidified into a pernicious tradition for his successors. It is not necessary to seek proof in Bismarck's critics. His own correspondence and Reminiscences, even without Busch's disclosures, constitute the indictment. The invisible writing between the lines in the Memoirs of Prince Hohenlohe, a cultivated, refined, and patriotic nobleman, is more damning than the bitterest party pamphlet. Too much in Bismarck's character and acts needs repudiation or an apology, but neither he nor his worshippers felt that either was required.

The Kulturkampf.

At the outset of the period Germany was involved in the Kulturkampf, the origin of which must be sought partly in the growth of political Ultramontanism outside Germany—in Austria, France, and Bavaria—of which the syllabus of 1864, the Vatican Council and Decrees of 1870 were forcible expressions; partly in the nationalist and secularist political creeds of National Liberalism in Germany (the party which had so powerfully supported before and after 1867 the unification programme); partly in the eternal and insoluble problem of the relations of a civil power claiming to be sovereign in the civil state

to a Catholic Church claiming to be sovereign in an independent ecclesiastical organization, and to have a title for its authority intrinsically superior to any that the civil state could plead. The Kulturkampf owed its name to the great pathologist Virchow, who was one of the most prominent members of the Radical party in the Reichstag, and who, unlike other distinguished Liberal intellectuals, such as Mommsen, von Sybel, and Treitschke, had not apostatized to Caesarism and Bismarck, and the phrase was intended to emphasize the central issue at stake—a conflict between two principles and theories of civilization. In the furious controversy that rent Germany for ten years two separate struggles were blended. The first arose from the reluctance of the German Roman Catholic Church to accept the Vatican Decrees, asserting Papal infallibility and Papal omnipotence in the administration of the Church; the second centred in a struggle over the control of the schools, and the education and civil obedience of the priesthood. The purely theological issue was raised by a great scholar, Döllinger, who condemned the Papal claims as historically unfounded, dogmatically false, fatal to a true theory of Catholic and doctrinal development, and forced on the Church by a Council packed, manipulated, and coerced by the Vatican and the Jesuits. Döllinger was a leader of Catholic Liberalism, and his refusal to accept the Decrees led to the formation and secession of the Old Catholics. Unfortunately their cause was confused with the other issues at stake and they were supported by political and intellectual parties, Protestant or frankly Secularist, whose advocacy could with some reason be regarded as hostile

to Catholicism, and whose victory would be fatal to the influence, perhaps the existence, of the Catholic Church. Between alliance with political and intellectual Liberalism the main tenets of whose creed (apart from the Vatican Decrees) were repugnant to German Roman Catholics and surrender to an omnipotent Papacy, German Catholics were in a cruel dilemma. Their allegiance to their Church, though it involved the acceptance of the Decrees, won the day, and the Old Catholics were left in a hopeless minority, which deprived them of weight and influence in either camp. They were praised and perished.

Bismarck's attitude.

But the second issue, a challenge to the supremacy of the civil state, was taken up by Bismarck with the enthusiastic support of the National Liberal party. The Chancellor feared a great Catholic coalition against the new empire; the claims of Ultramontanism touched to the quick his determination that Germany should be master in its own house and that he should be master in Germany; the Polish sympathies of the Clericals, the intervention of the Church in secular politics, the wealth and strength of the orders and the denials of the competence of the civil power to deal with education or faith, with the conditions of civil obedience or of employment under the state, the formation of a great political party, the Centre or Clericals, united on a confessional not a political basis, stirred in him all his fighting qualities—for the programme of the Clericals was a veiled assault on the Chancellor and his supremacy. Bismarck and the National Liberals took their stand on the principle that the sovereignty of the empire should be over all persons and in all causes,

ecclesiastical as well as civil, throughout its dominions supreme—the principle, in short, of the Reformation State and the Act of Supremacy in England, where the Vatican Decrees had stirred the ashes, always hot, of struggles long decided, and in which Mr. Gladstone, Döllinger's friend, had gladly plunged into the arena. If, indeed, we measure movements by the gravity of their issues and their spiritual, intellectual, and moral import, the Vatican Decrees of 1870, following on the syllabus of 1864, were a greater event in the evolution of society and the history of civilization than the unification of the German empire.

The 'May Laws.'

The National Liberals were determined to fight the fight out, and they supported the drastic legislation and executive action of the Prussian Government. The 'May Laws' proposed by von Falk in the Prussian Diet are a convenient term for this legislation, though strictly speaking it only applies to the group of acts promulgated on May 15, 1873. Between 1872 and 1876 the Jesuits were expelled; civil marriage was made compulsory; the Pulpit Paragraph was added to the Imperial Penal Code by which priests were forbidden to interfere officially in political matters; the Catholic Bureau in the Ministry of Education was suppressed, and the inspection of schools was withdrawn from the clergy and placed in the hands of state inspectors; priests were forbidden to abuse ecclesiastical punishments, e.g. excommunication: all ecclesiastical seminaries were placed under state control; no priest was to hold office in the Church unless he were a German, educated in a German university, and had passed a university examination in German history,

philosophy, literature, and classics; exercise of office by unauthorized persons was made punishable by loss of civic rights, and power was given to suspend in any diocese where the bishop was recalcitrant the payment to the Roman Church authorized since 1817.

Failure and its causes.

Bismarck seems to have regarded the struggle as similar to the constitutional struggle with Liberalism in 1862. Firmness would break down the opposition, and he announced in a famous phrase that 'we will not go to Canossa either in the flesh or in the spirit'. But he had miscalculated the strength and determination of his opponents. A struggle with the Roman Church was a very different affair from a struggle with the intellectuals of 1862; the empress and the court, where the Radziwills, a powerful Polish family, had great influence, were against him; the emperor viewed with dismay the schism which clove Germany into two camps of embittered opponents; many Protestants resented and feared the extreme claims for the secular power embodied in the 'May Laws'; the old Conservatives broke away and reproached Bismarck for desertion from the principle of a Christian state, and the power of the National Liberals drove many Bismarckians who hated Liberalism and all its works into the arms of the opposition. Most formidable of all was the stubborn refusal of Roman Catholics to obey the law. They defied the executive with the result that in 1876 six bishops (including the Cardinal-Archbishop of Posen, Ledochowski, the Archbishop of Cologne, and the Bishop of Trier) were in prison, and 1,300 parishes had no public worship. The Roman Catholic population, in fact, was in open revolt, and the most drastic police

measures and the penalties of the courts failed to diminish either its spirit or its refusal to accept the penal laws as valid. In the Reichstag, the Centre, led by the ablest of the Parliamentarians whom Germany has produced, Windthorst, in season and out of season, attacked and opposed the Chancellor, his ministers, and their measures. In the general election of 1874 the Clericals increased their numbers from 63 to 91, and could point to a poll of a million and a half of voters on their side.

A change of system, 1878.

By 1878 Bismarck was confronted with a dangerous and a difficult situation. The Conservatives, after a split in 1876, had reunited. They wanted a change of programme —the alienation of Bismarck from National Liberalism, a return to a conservative policy and a struggle with Social Democracy which they feared far more than Windthorst and the Clericals, for whom indeed they had much sympathy. Bismarck's heart was with Conservatism. He was sick of the Kulturkampf which he chose to regard as hopelessly mismanaged by Falk and the National Liberals, and with the intuition which was one of his greatest gifts he divined truly that Liberalism was a spent force, that a reaction had set in, that Radicalism would either dwindle, peak and pine, or be transformed into Social Democracy, and that Germany required or would accept a new departure. He might have continued the Kulturkampf if he were willing to pay the price—a real political alliance with the National Liberals. Overtures to their leader Bennigsen and an offer of a ministerial post made it clear that the Liberals expected posts for their other prominent members—almost to make a National Liberal administration, and this Bismarck peremptorily refused.

Bennigsen could have a post, but the adoption of Parliamentary and party government was out of the question. Bennigsen refused and Bismarck turned elsewhere. The death of Pio Nono and the election of Leo XIII inaugurated a new era at the Vatican. Negotiations were commenced. Bismarck went to Canossa by a devious and slow route, and he called it a compromise, not Canossa. Falk resigned and Puttkamer, a Conservative, took his place. In 1881 the Government was granted a discretionary power in the enforcement of the penal legislation; in 1886 the state examination of priests was given up, as was also the state control of seminaries, while from 1881 onwards a series of arrangements with the Vatican, by which appointments were to be made by agreement between Pope and King-Emperor, brought the struggle to an end. In return Bismarck obtained a general though not an unvarying support from the Centre Party.

Foreign policy.

The situation in foreign affairs had also assisted Bismarck's reversal of his policy. In 1880 he was no longer in such fear of a great ultramontane coalition against the empire, and in foreign affairs he had achieved imposing successes. After 1871 Bismarck had a triple objective. Peace was essential that Germany might consolidate the internal fabric and organize afresh her military strength on an imperial basis. France had ceased to be formidable for the time; the cessions of territory, the heavy indemnities, the cost of the war, and internal disunion made *revanche* a possible ideal in a distant future but a chimera in 1871. France had to settle her form of government, and it was not until 1878—if then—that the Republic could be regarded as firmly established. Bismarck aimed at

isolating France in Europe, and at encouraging the war of parties, Bourbonists, Orleanists, Napoleonists, Republicans, Clericals, and Secularists, which would postpone the unity that was the first condition of a sane and healthy recuperation, and of a France valuable as an ally to other Powers. Great Britain, absorbed in domestic and colonial problems, was only formidable on the Continent if allied with a strong continental state. The Italian kingdom was struggling with financial chaos, unification, and the avowed hostility of the Vatican. It would suffice, and that was easy of accomplishment, to keep her and France apart. By encouraging French colonial expansion east of Algiers a wedge was driven between France and Italy, and before long Egypt came as a godsend to the Wilhelmstrasse to separate France from Great Britain. The German Foreign Office could claim to be the impartial friend of both—Germany had as yet no interest in Egypt—in order to prevent both from being friends with each other. There remained Russia and Austria. Prussia owed Russia a big debt, for Russia's friendly neutrality in the Franco-German War had made the military triumph and the Peace of Frankfort possible. Under Gortschakoff Bismarck had begun his political apprenticeship; and Bismarck had also as keen a sense of the Russian danger to Germany as ever Frederick the Great had had. But with Bismarck as with Frederick, if 'the wire between Berlin and Petrograd must always be kept open', it was for the sake not of Russia but of Prussia. Russia must also be kept isolated—for isolation from other European states meant dependence on Berlin. And isolation was easy. The

traditions bequeathed by the Crimean War, British terror at the idea of Constantinople falling into Russian hands, conflicting interests in Asia, where Russian expansion stimulated British annexations and Russian annexations stimulated British expansion, were quite enough, under a fostering German hand, to make an Anglo-Russian *entente* inconceivable. And the revival of British imperialism that came with the ministry of Disraeli in 1874 made Great Britain the champion of Turkish integrity and an avowed foe of Russia. A majority of the British people saw Russia's hand and intrigues everywhere; the Foreign Office at Petrograd saw the British hand and intrigues everywhere, and scarcely any one in London or Petrograd saw or felt the German hand benevolently ready to provide spectacles or blinkers, or was conscious of the whispers which fanned the enmity on both sides.

Austria-Hungary.

With Austria Bismarck desired a reconciliation and an understanding, which would cut away a Catholic power from Catholic France. Here the difficulty lay in the collision of interests between Vienna and Petrograd. Austria feared and opposed Russian advance in the Balkans, a fear whetted by the growing force of the Pan-Slavist movement and the difficulties of ruling her Slav subjects. Since 1866 Bismarck had decided that a united Germany could and ought to find a reconciliation with Austria which would close the flank of both empires, and which might become possible when Austria recognized that she was a Danubian not a German state, for which the path of expansion and power lay south-eastwards to Salonica and the Aegean, and with a friendly Germany behind her. The first great step was achieved in 1872,

'peace was assured', and the war cloud passed away in a drizzle of recriminations and denials. The episode was humiliating for Bismarck. He represented the whole affair as a Stock Exchange job, engineered on flamboyant indiscretions of military Chauvinists, his customary scapegoat—an explanation, improbable in itself, and absolutely inconsistent with the evidence available. How far the Chancellor seriously contemplated war, how far he was by his usual press and other methods testing the situation, how far he hoped to bully France into dropping her reforms and thus to score an imposing success for German prestige, it would be difficult to decide. But it is certain that cool and responsible statesmen at Paris, London, and Petrograd believed the danger to be real, and Bismarck's explosion of anger betrayed both the rebuff he had received and a confession that Berlin had blundered badly. In the whole affair can be detected two significant movements—the beginning of a *rapprochement* between France and Russia, the tension between Germany and Russia, both of which Bismarck in calmer moments was bound to view with anxiety.

The Eastern Question.

The crisis in the East was handled with great skill. The outbreak of revolts in Montenegro, Serbia, and Bulgaria, Turkish massacres, the failure of the great Powers to settle a basis for concerted action, the Russo-Turkish War, the defeat of Turkey, the march of the Russian army to the outskirts of Constantinople, the terms that Russia intended to impose on the Porte by the Treaty of San Stefano and the dispatch of the British fleet into the Sea of Marmora, produced a situation in which the fate of the Ottoman Empire sank into insig-

nificance before the prospect of a European conflagration. A war between Great Britain and Russia would almost certainly have involved a war between Austria and Russia, from which Germany could not have kept clear, and this would give France her opportunity. Bismarck saw his whole system imperilled, for to fight with Austria against Russia was as serious as to fight with Russia against Austria. Moreover, a war in which Germany had no direct interest but was dragged in to protect the interests of other states was the negation of Prussian principles—no less 'wrong' than to engage in a war in which victory was not demonstrably certain and the gains of victory essential to German power. Peace was Germany's interest in 1878, and Bismarck, proclaiming his rôle to be that of 'honest broker' between the contending states, succeeded in transferring the settlement to a congress at Berlin, where, under German presidency, the elaborate Treaties of Berlin were concluded (1878).

The Berlin Treaties, 1878.

Bismarck achieved his object under conditions which registered a personal triumph for himself and the recognition of German power and ascendancy on the Continent. All who had laboured for German unification and the establishment of a German Empire without whose acquiescence European problems could not be solved, saw with pride a European congress meeting at the German capital and the German Chancellor the virtual arbiter of Europe. War was averted. The Russian proposals were substantially modified; a fresh term of life was granted to the Ottoman Empire, 'consolidated' (Disraeli proclaimed), by having Rumania, Serbia, Montenegro, and Bulgaria wrested from Turkish rule, by the lease of Cyprus

to Great Britain, and the lease of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria. 'The peace' and 'the honour' belonged to Bismarck. But if Great Britain, as the ally of Turkey, was more irretrievably than ever committed to hostility to Russia and the wire between London and Petrograd cut and the telegraph poles pulled down, Bismarck had incurred the resentment of Russia, which regarded him as the friend of Austria and Great Britain. Bismarck complained of Gortschakoff's vanity and Russian ingratitude, but the Congress of Berlin made it clear that Germany could not have the alliance both of Austria and Russia—could not complete the understanding of 1872 by a triple alliance which would isolate France absolutely and leave the way open for the simple task of keeping France and England apart.

The alliance with Austria, 1879.

After the most careful reflection Bismarck decided for Austria, and in 1879 he concluded the defensive alliance with the Dual Empire which henceforward was the basis of his system. Austria, under Andrassy, the Magyar statesman, was more than ready to come to terms, but Bismarck had one of the hardest struggles of his life to wring acceptance of the treaty from his sovereign, bound by personal ties to the Russian Court, and unable to forget the war of 1866, and Russian services in 1866 and 1870, the sovereign to whom a rupture with Russia was repugnant on every ground. William's reluctant assent was a conspicuous example of Bismarck s assertion : 'My old master can always be talked over, even if he is not convinced' (Mein alter Herr ist stets überredet, wenn nicht überzeugt gewesen).

The treaty with Austria was one of Bismarck's most

impressive strokes; if it secured Austria from attack by Russia it no less secured Germany in the event of a joint attack by Russia and France. The Dual Alliance of 1879 was joined in 1882 by Italy, when it became the Triple Alliance, the central pivot of the European system for thirty years to come. The accession of Italy gratified Italian pride, but for Bismarck it had a quadruple meaning. It effectually cut off a Latin state from France; it closed the Alpine passes for Germany and Austria against attack from the south; it minimized for many years the possibilities of friction between Italy and Austria; and it gave the central powers an important Mediterranean position against both France and Great Britain. Nor did Bismarck despair of reopening a friendly understanding with Russia. Social Democracy in one country, Nihilism in the other, were a bond and a menace to the conservative governing classes in both states: Anglo-Russian rivalry and the continuous danger of an Anglo-Russian war worked against Russian isolation; the personal ties between the two ruling houses had not been weakened by the virtual rupture in 1879, and Gortschakoff's retirement in 1882 removed the personal hostility of the Russian Chancellor. In 1884 Bismarck was able to conclude a secret compact with Russia, 'the reinsurance treaty', followed by a meeting of the Three Emperors with their chancellors at Skierniewice, by which each of the three states undertook a benevolent neutrality in case of attack by another power. Once again Bismarck had blocked the road to a coalition of France and Russia against the German Empire. The non-renewal of this reinsurance after his retirement was one of the 'blunders'

Italy and the Triple Alliance of 1882.

March 21, 1884.

of his successor, Caprivi, and was most bitterly censured by Bismarck.

Home policy.

By 1884 the home policy of the Chancellor was well established in its second and final phase. Between 1871 and 1878, with the help of the National Liberals, much had been done by constructive legislation to advance the unification of Germany. Imperial law took over the measures already passed previous to 1871, such as the code of commercial law of 1861 (replaced by the code of 1897), the Criminal Code of 1869, and the code regulating industrial conditions (*Gewerbeordnung*) of 1870. In 1877, after drastic revision by a special commission, codes of civil and criminal procedure were enacted. These led up to the Civil Code, which after nine years of revision (1887–96) was enacted in 1897 and came into force in 1900. In 1871 a common coinage was established for the whole empire, the currency was established on a gold standard (1873), and the Imperial Bank took the place of the Prussian State Bank. The Banking Act of 1875 revised the whole banking system, and a uniform imperial system was legalized. Bismarck failed in his proposals to transfer the Prussian state railways to the empire, still more to acquire either the state-owned or privately-owned railways of the federated states; but the foundation of the Imperial Railway Office (*Reichseisenbahnamt*) practically achieved some of his main objects, the unification of railway communication by uniformity of working, uniform tariffs, and the extension of the lines to meet the expanding needs of commerce. Another of his objects was not achieved. For he had hoped through an imperial railway system to transfer to the

Imperial Treasury the increasing profits of railway management, and thus to provide an expanding imperial revenue. The states, however, desired to keep this revenue for themselves, and the Reichstag saw in the proposal a grave danger. The imperial administration would be provided with an automatic and large income, free from all Parliamentary check. The control of the Reichstag over the executive was already too slight to permit of a voluntary abdication of its one important right—the voting of the imperial Budget. The financial needs of the empire, and the failure to meet them as Bismarck had hoped, operated powerfully in the fiscal revolution that was inaugurated in 1879.

The Imperial Post Office.

No better unification work was done than by the Imperial Post Office under Herr von Stephan, an administrator of the first order. Bismarck always belittled Stephan's ability, as indeed he belittled the success of every one and everything for which he was not himself directly responsible, but the comprehensive reforms carried out by Stephan in postal and telegraphic business made the German Post Office second to none in the world in its efficiency, and its adaptation of progressive science to social needs.

Significance of the change.

The importance of this crowded period of legislative and administrative reforms lies in many directions. They involved a remarkable expansion of the imperial executive and of the imperial staff, located in Berlin. The great executive departments imperialized the capital as well as the nation. Berlin became with every decade more markedly the higher brain centre of politics, the army, business, and society for the whole national life. The

uniformity and symmetry of the various codes brought home to every German man and woman their membership in an imperial organization which transcended and absorbed the narrower patriotism of local or dynastic allegiance. The greatness of Germany rested on the strength and efficiency of the empire, which to every one who posted a letter, used a coin, sent a telegram, bought a railway ticket, kept a banking account, or appeared in a law court became a living reality. Imperial law, imperial officials, imperial regulations, imperial tariffs were woven into the thought and life of Germany. And when we seek for the origins and causes of a vaulting German ambition and of Pan-Germanism—the conviction that German 'Kultur' is superior to all other 'Kulturs' and German efficiency to all other efficiencies, and that the destinies of Europe lay in the unification of all the Teutonic races under a supreme German and imperial organization—the cumulative and remarkable achievements registered in legislation and administration, saturated with science, are both a cause and an effect of this intoxicating nationalist creed. These achievements nourished the German belief in a natural German superiority, intellectual, moral, and physical. 'I do not know', wrote Bismarck as early as 1858, 'how we Germans got the reputation of retiring modesty. There is not a single one of us who does not think that he understands everything, from strategy to picking the fleas off a dog, better than professionals who have devoted their lives to it.'

Trade and industry.

The assistance to trade of all these activities was enormous. They completed the work of the Zollverein,

and if German industry and commerce went ahead by leaps and bounds not the least of the causes was the release of industry from countless shackles on development, and the creation of institutions and machinery from one end of Germany to the other, which put the imperial organization at the back of the trader and the merchant. Equally noticeable is the steady diminution of, and the increasing encroachment upon, the spheres of the separate states. The scope of state legislation was reduced, and the next two decades reduced it still further. The empire, and with it Prussia, took a larger and larger share in the direction of the unified national life. Imperialization was for the most part a euphemism for Prussianization. As with the North German Confederation after 1867, so with the empire after 1871, Prussia imposed her institutions, her civil service, her standard of values and of work, her ideals on non-Prussian Germany. Bismarck might say that his hardest battles after 1871 were with Prussian particularism—the spirit and traditions of the *Kreuzzeitung* Junkertum—and the remark is profoundly true, but his work was to Prussianize the empire without permitting the Prussian aristocracy to ruin the result by a naked assertion in theory and practice that nothing but Prussia mattered, and to veil in an imperial dress the application to non-Prussian Germany of Prussian ethics of monarchical autocracy and the state based on might and force. The court was Prussian. William never forgot that he was King of Prussia by the Grace of God, but he had to be reminded that he was also Emperor *in*, not *of*, Germany by the grace of the German princes. He was a Prussian soldier, surrounded

Prussianization.

by Prussian soldiers with Königgrätz in their gait and Sedan in their faces; his Chancellor was a Prussian of the Prussians. 'Who are these Hohenzollerns?' he once asked; 'we Bismarcks have been longer in the March than they have.' And just as the army of the states was Prussianized, so was education. The elementary schools of the federated states assimilated willingly or unwillingly the Prussian system, code, and machinery. Education must be unified, and obviously Prussia could not be Saxonized or Bavarianized. The Prussian article was the best, and it was the only one available. But perhaps most important of all was the Prussianization of intellect. In 1874 Treitschke became a professor at Berlin, where his lectures and personality completed the teaching of his books. As the Napoleonic legend in France shows, the interpretation of a nation's history may be not less a force in the making of a nation than a people's songs; and von Sybel, Droysen, and Treitschke, the professors whom Bismarck affected to despise, were through the manuals of the elementary schools and the text-books of the universities the apostles and disciples of Prussianization.

Protection and state socialism.

In 1879 Bismarck, having broken with the National Liberals, entered on a comprehensive policy of protection and state socialism, the main reasons for which were three. With 1877 began the epoch of agricultural depression which hit the agricultural interest, led by Prussian Conservatism, very hard. Protection against the competition of the New World was demanded, and protection of agriculture involved protection of industry. Imperial finance was in sore straits, and three remedies were

possible: direct imperial taxation, which would have met with strenuous resistance, an increased matricular contribution from the federated states, which would be very unpopular, and indirect taxation through an imperial tariff imposed both to raise revenue and be protective. Bismarck chose the third because it combined, in his judgement, every advantage—the line of least resistance, a large and elastic revenue, the alliance of the protected interests, and ample material for political bargains. The growth of Social Democracy inspired the elaborate social legislation which after years of strenuous discussion, criticism, parliamentary rebuffs (such as the rejection of the tobacco and brandy monopolies), and much unpopularity, resulted in the acts which provided for compulsory insurance against sickness (1883), insurance against accident in employment (1884), and insurance against old age (1889) in the shape of old-age pensions. By these measures Bismarck intended to fight Social Democracy with its own weapons, and prove that the empire would do more for the working classes than their political representatives. But it is noticeable that he resisted proposals for effective factory legislation and restraint of Sunday labour—omissions which Social Democracy did not forget, and which were not made good till much later.

Social Democracy.

By 1890 Social Democracy had become a very formidable political and economic force, and it found in August Bebel a leader of great oratorical power, of a greater organizing capacity, and gifted with a personality and character that made him after the chancellor the most impressive figure in German public life. Born in 1840, a turner by trade, Bebel was elected to the North

German Diet in 1867, and from that year till his death in 1913 he was the life and soul of a movement which from tiny beginnings numbered in 1913 110 members—the largest single party in the Reichstag—representing 5,500,000 votes, and he had proved that neither prison nor persecution could diminish his courage or shake his influence. His success was achieved against the arrayed forces of the court, a powerful government, the military chiefs, the leaders of the aristocracy and a capitalistic society, and most of the political parties. It was a more remarkable success than that of the Clericals, led by Windthorst, in the Kulturkampf, for the struggle in the first twenty years was no less bitter and far more prolonged.

Penal legislation.

Bismarck did his best to stamp the movement out in its infancy. In 1872 Bebel and Liebknecht—the two representatives in the Reichstag—were sent to prison for two years. But in 1874 there were nine Social Democrats returned, in 1877 twelve. The attempt on the emperor's life by Nobiling in 1878 was unjustly attributed to the Socialists, and a ferocious law passed prohibiting Socialist books, meetings or unions, and empowering the Bundesrat to proclaim a state of siege in any town, and this law was thrice renewed in 1881, 1886, and 1888. It was rigorously applied; the whole Socialist organization was broken up and its members punished, harassed, and ruined by the police—but with the result that in 1881 the Socialist Democrats secured twelve, in 1887 thirty-five, in 1893 forty-four, in 1898 fifty-six, and in 1903 eighty-one seats in the Reichstag. National Liberalism had split in half and gone to pieces, Radicalism maintained a precarious existence, Conservatism showed no advance in

numbers; only the Centre, or Clericals, was a formidable competitor as a single party, and Clericalism retained its hold on the Catholic population in big urban centres largely through its advocacy of drastic social and economic reform. But Bebel before his death had the satisfaction of knowing that even the strongholds of the Centre were not invulnerable to Social Democracy, and of leading a party stronger in numbers and in discipline than the Centre in the Reichstag, while in the number of votes behind the two parties Social Democracy had an overwhelming superiority.

Bismarck's failure.

Windthorst and Bebel were the only two men who beat Bismarck in plain fight and on battle-grounds of Bismarck's own choosing; but Windthorst had all the strength of the Roman Church on his side, Bebel had both the Roman and the Protestant Churches against him. The healing and constructive measures by which Bismarck intended to cut the ground from under the enemy's feet were as unsuccessful in their political results as the penal code and the dragonnades of the police. The Socialists were not merely fighting for a new order of society based on a revolution in economic organization—a Utopia with all the grip that Utopias can have on minds imprisoned in drudgery and toil—but for freedom, liberty of speech and of action. Bismarck blundered grievously in his diagnosis when he supposed that sops of socialism, however big, administered through a state of siege would exorcise the workers from 'charlatans' and 'quacks'. His social legislation was in itself a damning indictment of the existing economic organization, and the criticism to which it was subjected revealed abuses and evils more

numerous and glaring than those it proposed to cure. And the penal codes drove home the true character of the government at whose mercy the working classes lived. They accepted the state socialism, not as a boon, but as a small instalment, extorted by fear, of what a really socialistic state would give them. Had Bismarck abolished the Reichstag and manhood suffrage he might have defeated Bebel—but Bebel practically drove Bismarck and his successors to a dilemma—a *coup d'état* in the constitution (which was impossible) or defeat. It is true that the Socialist Democrats achieved nothing constructive—and this was the weakest point in a party of political thought and action—but their *raison d'être* lay in a critical exposure of the evils and defects of a capitalistic society and organization, manipulated and controlled by a militarist governing class.

Colonial policy.

The year 1884 saw the definitive commencement of a colonial empire. Opposition in the Reichstag and the refusal of financial assistance strengthened Bismarck's reluctance to make colonial acquisitions which would raise difficulties with Great Britain and France, but in 1884 an understanding had been arrived at with France, and the German flag was hoisted in South-West Africa, in Togoland, and the Cameroons, in the north of New Guinea and the adjoining islands, while in 1885 a start was made on the east coast of Africa opposite Zanzibar. In 1884, and again in 1890, important congresses were held at Berlin, and at the latter the demarcation and partition of Africa were mapped out, and the respective shares of the European states practically settled as they exist to-day. The agreement with Great Britain, con-

cluded after Bismarck's resignation, which gave the protectorate of Zanzibar to England in return for the cession of Heligoland, was bitterly criticized by Bismarck himself and the leaders of the colonial party which had united (1887) into a single society (Deutsche Colonial-Gesellschaft) the various organizations for advocating a forward colonial policy.

Colonial development.

Bismarck's policy was to leave the development of the various acquisitions to chartered mercantile companies under German protection, without assuming direct imperial responsibility, but the initial difficulties, financial, political, and administrative, necessitated a gradual departure, though it was not until 1907 that a separate colonial office was set up. The early years of colonial enterprise disappointed the ambitions of the 'colonialists'. Administrative blunders and abuses, costly colonial wars, the inevitable slowness in material development, apathy at home, the refusal of the Reichstag to vote large funds when the imperial exchequer was drained by the competition in armaments in Europe, and the unsuitability of the acquisitions for the emigration of a white population contributed to handicap a government and a nation which started late in the race for extra-European dominions and had to acquire through blunders and failures the experience, tradition, and organization that neither science nor the conviction of German superiority could confer by the hoisting of a flag and the colouring of a map. Two decades had to elapse before the full effect of 'colonialism' on German policy and ambitions was patent to the world.

The understanding with France of 1884 was of brief

Foreign policy.

duration. The three years from 1884 to 1887 were marked by a series of crises in European politics. Great Britain was involved in Egypt, and her relations with France were severely strained; in 1885 she was on the brink of war with Russia over Russian menaces to Afghanistan; the union of Eastern Roumelia with Bulgaria, a war with Serbia, and a revolution in Bulgaria itself had embittered the relations of Austria and Russia; in France the career of Boulanger, increases in the French army, and frontier incidents seemed to threaten another Franco-German war, and the Russian press bristled with attacks on Germany and Bismarck which were readily taken up by the German papers. The German government decided to make a large increase in the army, anticipating the renewal of the Septennate, which would expire in 1888. The Reichstag offered a compromise, which Bismarck refused, and the resulting general election stirred immense excitement. In the new Reichstag the government plan went through. But the Russian danger intensified rather than diminished. A violent tariff war broke out, with reprisals on both sides, and in February 1888 the German government proposed a supplementary military law, the effect of which was to add half a million men to the war establishment and to provide a special vote of £14,000,000 for military equipment.

The military law provoked strong criticism. Bismarck, in perhaps the greatest of his speeches (February 6, 1888), reviewed with the vibrating touch of the master his foreign policy at length, concluding with the famous remark, 'We Germans fear God and nothing else in the world,' and silenced all opposition by the sheer weight of

his authority. It was the most dramatic and signal parliamentary triumph in his career; the demonstrations before the Chancellery that evening marked the zenith of his popularity, and the defiant publication of the text of the Triple Alliance seemed flat beside the hurricane of enthusiasm which recalled the July days of 1870. But his most distinguished French biographer, M. Matter, has well pointed out that the speech was as influential at Petrograd and Paris as at Berlin. It produced the one result against which Bismarck had worked for seventeen years, an entente between France and Russia which inevitably ripened into the Dual Alliance.

The year of the Three Emperors.

1888 was also the year of the Three Emperors. William I died on March 9, mourned by the whole German people, but by no one more sincerely than by Bismarck himself. The simplicity of his character, his high sense of duty, his soldier's pride, and the wonderful achievements of his reign, to all of which he had conspicuously contributed, made his venerable figure the incarnation in German eyes of the heroic epoch. His son, the Emperor Frederick III, in whom for two generations the hopes of Liberal Germany had been centred, was a dying man at his accession. At the changes both in the spirit and the letter of German law, administration, and policy which might have been effected we can only guess from the resignation of the Minister for the Interior, Puttkamer, after a severe rebuke for the abuse of governmental power at elections. But the emperor died on June 15, after a reign of ninety-nine days of suffering, bravely borne, and in his grave were buried the past and the future of German Liberalism.

The Emperor William II and the dismissal of Bismarck.

The new emperor was in his thirtieth year and had studied at the feet of Bismarck. Eighteen months after his accession Germany was faced with a real 'chancellor crisis'. In the autumn of 1889 a proposal to renew the Socialist penal law met with strong opposition; the bill was amended and could have been carried if Bismarck had called on the Conservatives to vote for it. He did not, and the bill was lost (February 25, 1890). The Reichstag was dissolved, and in the general election the emperor indicated his intention to summon an international congress to discuss labour problems and to promote Prussian legislative reforms in the conditions and hours of labour. There was a clear conflict between the aims of the emperor and the policy of his chancellor. The Centre and the Socialists who had opposed the Socialist bill gained, and the Conservative and governmental coalition lost, seats. On March 20 Germany heard with consternation that the chancellor had sent in his resignation, which had been accepted. His resignation had been ordered, and the acceptance was a dismissal. The immediate occasion was the demand of the emperor for a reversal of a cabinet order of 1852, which made the minister-president the sole means of communication between the sovereign and the other ministers. Bismarck saw in the demand the reversal of the whole constitutional and administrative system, both in Prussia and the empire, on which his authority had been based, and to which he attributed his political success. The chancellor and minister-president would be no longer the head of the administration, but simply a departmental officer, surrounded by colleagues of equal authority—a position

impossible and odious to the Bismarck of 1890. The control of, and responsibility for, policy as a whole would pass from the minister-president to the king-emperor. The plain truth was, apart from constitutional technicalities, that the emperor, as Bismarck said, intended to be his own chancellor, and between the minister and his sovereign lay a fundamental conflict of policy, will, and temperament. It was a struggle between a young sovereign who wished to be master and a statesman who had been master for twenty-eight years. The emperor, Prince Hohenlohe records, was convinced that it was a question whether the House of Hohenzollern or the House of Bismarck was to govern in Prussia and the empire. No compromise was possible. The new era and the new man were in irreconcilable collision with the old era and the old man. And the new man could not wait. 'The pilot was dropped.' The emperor by his decision proclaimed his intention to be at once owner, captain, and pilot of the imperial ship of state.

Bismarck lived until 1898. The eight years between 1890 and his death (July 30, 1898) are the least edifying in his career. He retired to his estate at Friedrichsruhe, where in his solitude he made himself a bitter critic of the government, fighting behind the columns of newspapers to which he supplied official information and barbed innuendoes. Had another Bismarck been chancellor such conduct would have been crushed and punished with merciless severity. Bismarck had the unqualified sympathy of Germany in his dismissal, in the lack of gratitude for his unexampled services, and of forbearance for an old servant who from 1862 onwards could claim to have

saved and strengthened the personal and governmental authority of the Hohenzollern dynasty. For he had fought for the Prussian monarchy as strenuously as for the supremacy of Prussia and the unification of Germany under its presidential direction. Not once, but ten times, without impairing his own unique position—after 1863 he was indispensable—he might have allied with the forces of Liberalism and turned the Hohenzollern dynasty into a limited constitutional monarchy. The crown indeed that William II inherited was set with prerogatives that Bismarck had re-forged and re-riveted. There were formal and hollow reconciliations, but the eight years of splenetic bitterness and reprisals on both sides that followed 1890 were a gift to the scavengers in scandal, and to all the venomous flies and jackals of the slums of politics. Bismarck forgot his mighty past and the unique position he still held, no less than what grandeur of achievement owes to dignity, to self-respect, and to the homage that Germany never ceased to render him. Silence and a serene austerity would have been an irrefutable answer, and a majestic close to a majestic career. Instead, Germany and the world saw with pain Bismarck himself unbare alike to scoffer and seeker of the truth the feet of clay and the heart of black, tartareous, cold, infernal dregs.

His gifts, his character, his achievements, his principles of statecraft, his interpretation of life, and the tradition he bequeathed are written indelibly in the history of Prussia and the German empire. Those who built the mausoleum in the woods at Friedrichsruhe that he loved, where he was buried beside his devoted wife, judged

fitly when they placed only one word on his tomb: Bismarck.

The standard life of Bismarck in German is by L. HAHN (in 5 volumes), not translated. M. LENZ'S *Geschichte Bismarcks* (4th edition) is a masterly short biography in one volume. The best French biography is by P. MATTER, *Bismarck et son temps* (3 volumes). Bismarck's speeches have unfortunately not been translated into English. For readers of German H. BLUM'S *Das Deutsche Reich zur Zeit Bismarcks* is very useful, as are the two volumes (more critical) of W. ONCKEN, *Das Zeitalter des Kaisers Wilhelm.* W. H. DAWSON'S *The Evolution of Modern Germany* (6th edition) is an invaluable storehouse of facts and conclusions by an English expert. Most of the works of M. BUSCH have been translated into English, and reference to *Bismarck: Some Secret Pages of His History* (3 volumes) and to *The Memoirs of Prince Hohenlohe* (2 volumes, Eng. trans.) is indispensable for all who wish to study Bismarck's character and policy. See also references to Chapters XI and XII.

CHAPTER XIV

EPILOGUE, 1890–1914

THE period between the fall of Bismarck and the outbreak of the great European war in August 1914 cannot yet be treated scientifically. Many of the leading episodes are highly controversial, if for no other reason than that the material available for their discussion is very incomplete, and it is certain that in many cases the evidence and data that are lacking are more important than what are at the disposal of the historical student. Broad judgements resting on hypotheses or inferences, revision of which more or less drastic will be a necessity as the sources are widened and deepened, are of very doubtful utility. It is clear also that an adequate survey even of present-day events (and the evolution of Europe from 1890 onwards must be regarded as an affair of the present day) requires a detailed discussion wholly beyond the scope and purpose of this volume. Interpretation of the diplomacy and aims of Germany and Prussia in the spirit and in the light of the catastrophic conflagration of the world wide war has an obvious value, but it is the value that belongs to the work of the publicist, and the pamphleteer, and is alien to a historical text-book. It must suffice, therefore, to conclude with a brief epitome of the main events, the character and results of which are beyond dispute.

Bismarck claimed, and with justice, that his policy after 1871 was based on the principle that the German Empire

was a 'satiated state', i.e. that Germany as a result of the epoch of effort from 1848–91 had achieved what was necessary, and that the task of statesmanship in foreign and home policy was to consolidate what the great epoch of unification had secured. Whatever may be the judgement passed on the methods employed before or after 1871, or on the annexations that 'satisfied' Prussia and Germany it must fairly be admitted that Bismarck's tenure of power and direction of policy bear out the claim. His argument that a strong Germany made for European peace had at any rate the justification of fact on its side; and, as has been already indicated, the establishment of the Triple Alliance, the reluctance with which he embarked on a colonial policy, the indirect encouragement that he gave to Great Britain's absorption in colonial expansion, the diversion of France to Tunis, Tonkin, or Siam, and of Russian ambitions to Asia, had the double object of reducing the danger of European crises, and of keeping the European powers apart, no less than of securing a German hegemony on the Continent. It would have been easy for Bismarck to indulge German ambitions and to add to his own laurels by doing so. The skill with which his diplomacy was handled, the remarkable results that he achieved, the ability with which he satisfied German pride by emphasizing German ascendancy and kept in hand the Chauvinistic elements (and they were many) in Prussian militarism and Pan-German propagandists are no less remarkable than the strength with which he imposed limits on himself. In the list of his defects, crimes, or blunders, megalomania cannot fairly be placed. The intoxication of success, the fever of

nationalist pride, never mastered his head. One of the most passionate of men, he was one of the coolest and most calculating of statesmen, and because he always tried to see things as they really were and to measure political forces with precision, he was an embodiment of the Frederician tradition, and Frederick the Great would have regarded him as the disciple who had most ably penetrated the secrets of the master. Modern Germany has been too apt to forget that 'Realpolitik'—a policy based on reality—and the 'Realpolitiker'—the statesman of 'reality'—were not discoveries of the generation after 1890. The names of Frederick and Bismarck have been invoked as the founders of a school, which blundered in making a picture from the dreams of ambition and calling it reality. The undoubted relief that official Berlin felt when Bismarck fell was not merely due to the disappearance of an imperious and exacting chief, who inspired fear and crushed all independence. Young Germany was already chafing at the restraint on its will-to-power, and had already decided that, great as were the services of the old men and the old school, their work was done and the time had come for a new departure, new methods, new ends—or rather, new ends realized by the old methods. The German empire was no longer a 'satiated state', but a state and a nation whose needs had to be 'satiated'. The view that the emperor imposed on the German empire conceptions of its place in the world-empires of the future is as unsupported by evidence and is as intrinsically improbable as the view that Bismarck imposed on Germany the desire for unification. As Bismarck was representative of his generation, the

emperor was representative of the new age which had grown to manhood in the twenty years that had followed 1871, which had been saturated with the success and ascendency that Bismarck had triumphantly but patiently established, and which from 1890 onwards was more and more conscious of the strength, the disciplined and organized resources, and the ever upward development of wealth and power. It was inevitable that the new generation should aspire to be not less great than their fathers, not less master-builders on a foundation so solidly laid. The emperor gave voice to ambitions, already vocal in many quarters; in the head of the nation the new Germany hailed the leader whom their hearts demanded. The problem was one of method, not of ends. Emphasis has been laid in the preceding chapter on the industrial revolution in Germany, and the increasing momentum supplied by the tremendous economic expansion which set in with 1870. From 1890 onwards the full effect of this made itself felt, and it would have been impossible for any government in Germany to evade or ignore the influence and the pressure of indisputable economic facts. There is no need to repeat or multiply figures. But it is essential to remember that between 1890 and 1911 the population increased from 49,500,000 to 65,000,000, and that in 1913 German trade had imports of the value of £534,750,000, and exports of the value of £495,630,000, more than double what the imports and exports had been in 1890. Cool and responsible observers have pointed out the intimate causal connexion between national expansion, the demand for a world-policy, Weltpolitik, and the economic development. Mr. Dawson

(*Evolution of Modern Germany*, p. 338), writing in 1907, sums up his investigations both of the industrial position and the copious German literature dealing with it as follows:

> Germany is to-day compelled by certain irrefragable facts of its life as a nation—its growth of population, its limitations of territory, natural resources and climate, its inability to feed the increasing millions of its workers—to seek and find either (1) outlets for such population as cannot be maintained at home in a new Germany across land or sea, or (2) if for the present the population is to remain at home, and as a consequence be maintained by industry, new markets which shall be able to receive an enormously increased industrial output in exchange for food. The position of Germany is that of a prolific nation which is growing beyond the physical condition of its surroundings.

The effect of the position thus summed up has been most conspicuously seen in Germany's foreign policy and in the creation of a navy.

Foreign policy.

In 1890 the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria, and Italy held the field. Russia was loosely connected with it by the 'Reinsurance Treaty' of 1884; France and Great Britain, opposed to each other, stood outside of it, in isolation, and Russia was also in opposition to Great Britain and not in any way bound to France. It was a system of relations which made the German Empire remarkably secure. But in twenty years we are confronted with a wholly different political configuration. Between 1890 and 1895 France and Russia came together and the Dual Alliance had been formed (it was announced in 1897) to be a counterpoise to the Triple Alliance.

Anglo-French relations were severely strained in 1895 by colonial difficulties, and again in 1898, when Africa, the Sudan, and the Nile very nearly brought the two countries to war, while the Boer War, from 1899–1903, aroused the deep hostility of Germany as well as of France. But in 1903 a rapid change took place, and the origin of the Triple Entente dates from the Anglo-French colonial agreement of April 8, 1904, which cleaned off the slate the long outstanding disputes between Great Britain and France. In return for a recognition of the British position in Egypt, Great Britain recognized the primacy of the French position in Morocco, with freedom of action in each sphere respectively, while other difficulties in Siam, Madagascar, and Newfoundland were amicably settled. The removal of these causes of dispute did not lead to any formal alliance, but they did induce a political friendship which grew stronger every year. The entente of 1904 was followed in 1907 by a similar entente with Russia, which cleared up on definite lines the relations of both powers in Thibet, Afghanistan, and Persia—in a word, removed the main causes that had so long estranged Great Britain and Russia. 'The Triple Entente' was defined by Sir E. Grey (August 3, 1914) to be 'not an alliance, but a diplomatic group'; and it did not interfere with the Anglo-Japanese Alliance (August 12, 1905), which was renewed in 1910, and indeed may have helped materially towards the Russo-Japanese Agreement of 1911 which closed the unhappy chapter of the Russo-Japanese War and the Peace of Portsmouth of 1905.

It is not so easy to state and define Anglo-German relations. The Anglo-German Agreement of July 1, 1890,

which delimited German and British frontiers and spheres in East Africa, assigned Heligoland to Germany and a protectorate of Zanzibar to Great Britain, bitterly criticized as it was in Germany, seemed to open up a prospect of cordial co-operation, but the revelation of German hostility at the time of the Jameson Raid (1895), and the avowed ambitions and hopes of the German colonial party in South Africa, which, if the press and the literature of a country are evidence of a nation's feelings, were shared by all Germans, culminated in the severe tension, marked by fierce criticism and attacks in the Reichstag and the newspapers, during the Boer War. It is clear that intervention in that war by Germany would have had enthusiastic support in Germany at large, but either because it failed to secure European support for the proposal, or because the British navy was too strong, or because intervention would have opened up at once formidable European problems, or for all these reasons combined, the Government refused. It observed a stiff and unfriendly official correctness yet gave free play to the gusts of denunciation and anger which swept Germany from one end to the other. From 1903 onwards the barometer of Anglo-German political relations, with occasional indications of a feeble rise, remained steadily at the 'unsettled' point with a gradual fall to 'stormy'.

The position achieved by Bismarck had crumbled away, either from the operation of forces beyond the control of German diplomacy or from mismanagement and miscalculation. The Triple Entente of 1895 of France, Germany, and Russia, which peremptorily and drastically revised the Treaty which ended the Japano-Chinese War

of 1895—an entente to which Great Britain was not a party—and which inflicted on Japan a humiliation that she quietly accepted and set to work to wipe out in an immediate future, was followed in 1896 by the non-renewal of the Reinsurance Treaty, and in 1897 by the seizure by Germany of Tsingtau and the establishment of a fortified naval base in China which could be used as the centre of a diplomacy that worked for the commercial and economic penetration of northern China by German syndicates, capital, and industry. The Franco-Russian Alliance, the eternal Balkan problem, the Turco-Greek war, the question of Crete, the failure of internal reform in the Ottoman empire, the Armenian massacres, and the difficulties of Austria-Hungary, make the period from 1896 to 1900 a complicated tangle, a full inner history of which has yet to be written.

Domestic politics.

German foreign policy and the course of public opinion indicated a feverish restlessness, while the dissatisfaction with and criticism of the Government were outspoken and widespread. The situation in Germany in these years, from 1895 to 1903, was very like that in France between 1860 and 1869. The country expected and demanded imposing successes, the government no less sought imposing proofs of its skill and power, and it failed to satisfy either the Chauvinists, chafing at the refusal to solve political problems by the sword, or the economic and social discontent. The Socialist Democrat party grew apace, and, like the French in the second phase of the Second Empire, the Germans were as angry with themselves as with their foreign neighbours. Caprivi, who succeeded Bismarck as chancellor, was dismissed in 1894,

because he satisfied neither the Emperor, nor the Conservatives, nor the Clericals, nor the Radicals, Poles and Socialists, while at the same time he was the target of Bismarckian criticism. The government was at open war with the Conservative agrarians no less than with Social Democracy; the conflict between the interest of the agrarians and the interest of industry was acute; and not less between those who for political reasons desired to retain the friendship of Russia, and those who for economic reasons demanded a prohibitive tariff against the flooding of the German market by Russian and Rumanian corn. The commercial treaties were only carried by the help of Poles, Radicals, and Socialists. Henceforward the German government had to buy its majority by bargains with groups and make a coalition or bloc against all the rest. German politics degenerated into a struggle of conflicting economic interests. It was no longer, as between 1862 and 1890, a conflict between great constitutional and political principles. The Reichstag lost caste; the nation took less and less of a share in the struggles of the groups; it became more and more absorbed in economic expansion and the production of wealth, in a German national life and a realization of national ideals outside the scuffle, din, and trafficking of blocs or anti-blocs. Germans of authority, including the ex-Chancellor, Prince von Bülow, in his *Imperial Germany*, expressed their profound disappointment at the failure of Germany to develop political capacity, and a healthy parliamentary life, and ascribed the cause to the selfishness, intrigues, factions, bitterness, and parochialism of parties and their programmes innate in the German character. 'The history of our home

policy,' wrote von Bülow, 'is a history of political mistakes . . . political talent has been denied to the German nation.' Mommsen declared that the Socialist Democrats were the one party entitled to any respect.

The German critics were unfair; their exposure of the blunders and defects can be accepted, but their diagnosis of the causes showed a singular blindness. On paper the Imperial constitution conceded a considerable measure of self-government. The Reichstag was elected by universal manhood suffrage. But the Reichstag was denied all the conditions required for a healthy and free political life. It was not an organ which could make governments, ministers, or policy. Chancellors fell, not because they had lost the confidence of the Imperial Parliament, but because a group or groups round the throne, or the emperor himself, decided for reasons good or bad, personal or materialistic, that a change was required. The Reichstag did not control the Executive; it could not compel ministers to carry out what it wished; the Septennates or military budgets of seven years, the naval programmes for fixed periods, the Imperial tariffs resting on treaties and on detailed bargains with agriculture or industry, the complicated matricular contributions from the states to the Imperial exchequer, and the veto residing in the Bundesrat, made the financial control illusory and ridiculous. At most the Reichstag could refuse to pass a financial vote or a legislative proposal. The refusal only meant that the Government waited until it had 'squared' enough of the opposition, the vote was then reintroduced and passed. It was not the lack of political talent in the German nation that was responsible for the

degradation of politics. A nation that could produce political leaders such as Bennigsen, Windthorst, Lasker, Richter, Bebel, was not lacking in men of high political gifts. But political conditions which make a government irresponsible to representative institutions, which grant to political groups freedom of criticism, but exempt them from all responsibility for that criticism, which is faced by parties that know that no matter how strong they may be they will never have the sobering responsibility of office, nor gain the official experience that alone can turn politicians into statesmen, are bound to produce two pernicious results. Parties degenerate into groups, fighting simply for the material interests of the sections which have elected them, with the inevitable lowering and materialization of all political values. Secondly, ability will desert an arena bereft of all real power and influence, and flow to the quarters where real power and responsibility reward talent and ambition. Membership in the Reichstag might be a local advertisement and useful for winning the prizes and favours that opponents call 'jobs'; but control of a great syndicate, directorships of a great company with world-wide economic interests, meant wealth and real power. In the Wilhelmstrasse speeches or opposition in the Reichstag by the troublesome could be neglected or left to the managers to silence —if it was worth while; but the man who controlled a cartel or shipping of a million tons, or had syndicated all the iron or coal production, or a hundred banks, who by a telegram could exert economic pressure at Paris, New York, London, and Melbourne, when the Government needed it, was a force, and one recognized and

cultivated in more exalted quarters than the Wilhelmstrasse. The constitution made the politician powerless, and because the politician was powerless political life necessarily adapted itself to his position. In short, the motor forces and brains that made German policy after 1890 are not to be found in the Reichstag, and an autocracy that expects the political health of representative self-government in an organism deprived of the free functioning of the vital processes asks for the impossible. A no less potent reason was the cold but living hand of Prussia, 'the kingdom which dips one wing of the Eagle in the Niemen and the other in the Rhine'. The grip of the Prussian governing class on the Imperial Executive was the real *arcanum imperii*. Prince von Bülow points out frankly that 'Prussia was and is a state of soldiers and officials', and that 'it is impossible to rule in Prussia for any length of time without the support of the Conservatives', for the simple reason, omitted by von Bülow, that the Prussian franchise and Constitution of 1852 were so devised that a small class of soldiers, officials, and landowners, 'with whose blood the Prussian monarchy was cemented', could always command a majority in the Lower, and be assured of a permanent majority in the Upper, House of the Prussian Landtag. An alteration of the franchise and a redistribution of the seats would have shattered the power of the governing class. It was therefore impossible. Hence the anomaly that the Prussian representation in the Reichstag elected on manhood suffrage was fundamentally different from Prussian representation in the Landtag; a Chancellor-Minister-President secure of his Prussian majority in the

Landtag could snap his fingers at an impotent Prussian majority in the Reichstag, and he also controlled all the Prussian votes in the Federal Council (*Bundesrat*). Imperial government in defiance of the Reichstag was normal, but in defiance of Prussia was impossible. The empire without Prussia was the three southern states, or rather two, for Baden was to all intents Prussia ; Bavaria and Würtemberg, apart from Prussia, lay at the mercy of France and Austria, but Prussia without them was a state with a population of over 40,000,000 and an army of 3,000,000. But the Prussia which was indispensable to the empire was by its constitution a state of soldiers and officials, to whom Liberalism and Parliamentary Government were as the sin of witchcraft. Prussia imposed her will in all the essentials that made the principles and atmosphere of policy, and the Prussian will was not the will of the Prussian people but of the Prussian governing class. Their rule was constitutional in one sense only—that it rested on a constitution and on a franchise which even Bismarck pronounced to be ridiculous. Von Bülow points out, and it sums up the position, that the *modus vivendi* between Conservatism and Liberalism, between the North and the South, which in the Reichstag was possible though very difficult to attain, is impossible in Prussia. For Liberalism, and *a fortiori* Social Democracy, 'are the antithesis of the Prussian state,' i.e. the state as the Prussian governing class had made it. And round the throne, in the military cabinet of the King-Emperor, the Prussian landowner and soldier were supreme. If his epaulettes rubbed disdainfully against the non-epauletted shoulders of the Captains of Industry in the corridors of the

sovereign he knew that in any political crisis the military chiefs would take hold of the steering-wheel. A Bismarck alone could tell those military chiefs that if the army was their affair, foreign and home policy were his. Neither Caprivi, nor his successor, Prince Hohenlohe (1894–1900), nor, for all his ability, Prince von Bülow (1900–9), nor Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg (1909–?) had Bismarck's prestige, power, and genius. They were not indispensable and were dispensed with if royal pleasure or Junker intrigue required.

Germany and the Balkans.

Apart from motives or ulterior aims three very distinct features are distinguishable in German foreign policy between 1890 and 1904. The central pivot was the Austro-Hungarian Alliance. 'Germany was resolved to maintain her alliance with Austria at all costs.' Recent disclosures by Italy have shown that the Triple Alliance, as far back as 1900, caused anxiety at Berlin, owing to the divergence of interests between Italy and Austria, and it was Berlin that arbitrated between Vienna and Rome. But Austria came first, and adhesion to Austria meant support of Austrian or, more correctly, Hungarian aims. Berlin became involved in the Balkans and in the increasing friction between Russia and Austria. It is probably correct to infer that Germany adopted Austrian expansion and plans in the Balkans as her own. Secondly, for commercial no less than political reasons Berlin steadily tightened and extended her control over the Ottoman Empire. Turkey offered a great field for economic penetration and exploitation; the road to the east lay through Constantinople; if Austria had her 'natural' terminus in Salonica, the natural terminus for Germany

was Bagdad, Basra, and Koweit, on the Persian Gulf, by a route that commanded the valleys and basin of Tigris and Euphrates, and was beyond the control of sea-power. Hence a virtual protectorate of the Sultan was necessary; it would keep the Balkan states in order, block the advance of Russia, assist Austria, and be consummated in fullness of time by an eastern empire that would put Germany on terms of equality with the world-powers of Great Britain, Russia, and the United States. The European chancelleries struggling to achieve a European concert in the Near Eastern question diagnosed in the familiar recalcitrancy of the Turk a new stimulus, and discovered when the diplomatic probe was pushed deep enough that abler heads and stronger hands than those of 'the Red Sultan' or Young Turk were at work behind the curtain at Yildiz Kiosk. Pressure on Berlin by the chancelleries meant that pressure from Berlin would stiffen the Turk. The Sublime Porte could do nothing because Berlin raised difficulties; and Berlin was regrettably helpless, because the Sublime Porte was so difficult. The method of exploitation was original in its innocence. From Schliemann's excavations on the site of Troy to the sleepers of the railway section between Basra and Bagdad is a long cry, but Europe learned to fear professorial search for the pottery of empires that had crumbled away three thousand years ago; it always linked itself scientifically with the foundation of an empire to-day. Behind the professor would come the commercial traveller, the merchant, the cartographers, a financial syndicate, and a missionary whose murder would be avenged by ships of war and the annexation of the land on which

German blood had been shed. Great Britain saw in the search for the shells of oysters in the Persian Gulf their replacement by shells made by very competent human hands at Essen on the Rhine. In 1905 the German Emperor visited Morocco and Palestine, and let it be understood that three hundreds of millions of Mohammedans, who were not his subjects, would always find a protector in the Eagle of Prussia, which he inherited from the Teutonic knights who had Christianized Mohammedan Syria and a pagan Prussia by the sword. It was the most dramatic declaration of the religious toleration, hereditary in the House of Hohenzollern, that Prussian history records. In 1904 it was clear that the Triple Alliance included a supernumerary friend, the Ottoman Empire ; and that the Balkans and the integrity of Turkey, not worth to Bismarck the bones of a Pomeranian grenadier, were regarded by the great general staff at Berlin as worth three army corps and many thousands of massacred Armenians.

Naval Policy.

It was inevitable that the strenuous commercial rivalry between Great Britain and Germany should have its political side, which generated friction in every quarter of the globe. Against France and Russia Germany had a land frontier on which the German army could make itself felt, but German oversea trade, a large portion of which was with the British Empire and which grew with every year, could not be made secure merely by the German army. The demand for a real navy—the instrument of world policy—was the most striking achievement of German policy after 1890. The emperor had read Admiral Mahan on *The Influence of Sea Power* and ordered

him to be translated into German, but even the emperor could no more make his subjects read and digest a book unless they were willing than he could make them admire the statues of his ancestors in the Siegesallee, which had the object of all great art—to purify the spectator by pity and terror. The German people devoured Mahan because they wanted a navy; they did not want a navy because they devoured Mahan. Prince von Bülow expressed the thought of Germany when he said in 1897 that German trade and world position, without a navy, would be at the mercy of Great Britain 'like so much butter before the knife'. In 1898 the first of a series of remarkable Navy Bills was passed by Prince Hohenlohe; it was expanded in 1900, again in 1905, and again in 1908 and in 1912. It is only necessary to record here two facts—Germany by these naval programmes passed from the fourth to the second place in naval powers. The preamble of the first bill stated that the object was 'to create within a definite time a national fleet merely of such strength and power as to protect effectively the naval interests of the Empire'; later extensions asserted the object to be 'a fleet of such strength that even for the mightiest naval power a war with Germany would involve such risks as to jeopardize its own supremacy'. The insoluble difficulty that naval rivalry brought into the political relations of the two countries lay in the character of sea power. The command of the sea, unlike great military strength on land, cannot be shared or divided. Germany's power on the Continent rested on her army, beside which could exist states of great or of equal military strength. But sovereignty of the sea

is, like the sovereignty of theoretical jurisprudence, indivisible. Without the command of the sea Germany was and could continue to be a formidable state and a military power of the first order. But without the command of the sea the British empire ceased to exist. An army of four millions, armed with every device of science and wealth, would not enable the British Isles to hold out against the command of the sea for three months. And without the British Isles the British dominions, unions, and colonies beyond the seas would be at the mercy of the sea power, as 'so much butter before the knife'.

In 1904 Germany, which for twenty years after 1871 had successfully isolated every European power, suddenly arrived at the conclusion that the incompetency or incurable amiability of its directors, aided by the malevolence of its neighbours, had allowed Germany to be trapped into the isolation which ought to be the monopoly of the German Foreign Office and always labelled 'for external application only'—and that against a Triple Alliance, not too solid in its Italian member, had been built up a dual alliance, extending into a diplomatic group by the adherence of the sea power, which had resumed a direct political interest in the Continent. The German emperor is credited with having desired previously the alliance of Great Britain as 'a naval Austria', or perhaps as Bismarck desired the Russian alliance; 'the rogue elephant of Russia which was to walk between the two tame elephants of Germany and Austria'. And now the 'naval Austria' had attached itself to the flank of France and Russia; the British rogue was blundering along between the two tame elephants from the

menageries at Paris and Petrograd. Assuming a coalition to be hostile, statecraft can either dissolve it by the appropriate chemicals of political science, or break it by force. Tested by their action, the masters of statecraft at Berlin apparently decided to employ both methods—to dissolve and to break at one and the same time. In ten years (1904–14) they both dissolved and broke, but not the Dual Alliance and the diplomatic group. What dissolved and was broken was the Triple Alliance.

Germany and France.

In 1905 Germany showed clearly that she intended to dispute the position of France in Morocco, accepted by Great Britain in the Convention of 1904. Russia was crippled by the Japanese war, and M. Delcassé, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, was compelled, under a threat of war, to resign. The Moroccan question was referred to a conference at Algeciras, which resulted in an agreement that preserved the equality of the economic rights of all Powers, internationalized Tangier, and accorded to France the right of maintaining order in Morocco (1906). But Morocco continued to be a problem of acute danger, and from 1906 onwards the relations of France and Germany were strained almost to the breaking-point. In 1908, and still more in 1911, a European war seemed imminent, but the danger was, as the sequel showed, not dispelled but postponed. Fresh Franco-German conventions in 1909 and in 1911 consolidated the French position, and in 1912 France proclaimed a protectorate over Morocco which was accepted by Germany in 1913. In return France ceded a portion of French Congo in Equatorial Africa, which was added to the German colony of the Cameroons.

No less strained was the situation in the Balkans. The revolution at Constantinople (1908), which resulted in the deposition of Sultan Abdul Hamid and the advent of the Young Turks to power, was followed by the Austrian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina which annulled Article XXV of the Treaties of Berlin, without the consent of the signatories, and was an undisguised proclamation of Austrian policy. The reluctance of Russia to accept the accomplished fact was countered by an emphatic, if veiled, declaration by Germany that behind Austria stood her ally, 'in shining armour,' and that war would be the result of a persistence in the Russian refusal. Russia, still crippled by the effects of the Japanese war and in the throes of domestic disorder, was compelled to give way.

The German government claimed in the Balkan and Moroccan questions to have vindicated effectively the right of Germany to be an arbiter in European and extra-European affairs, but in Germany the Moroccan agreements were severely criticized. They did not correspond to the ambitions and programme of the forward party; and if the object of the German government was to shake the Triple Entente, and dissolve a defensive understanding that was wrongly regarded as an anti-German coalition, they had failed. 'The diplomatic group' had stood the test of severe pressure; it had yielded simply because peace was its aim, but it had neither dissolved nor broken. On the contrary, it had emerged stronger and more united by the conviction that its *raison d'être* was an essential of peace and the maintenance of the *status quo*. British ministerial declarations

in July 1911 were probably responsible for the avoidance of war over the Agadir incident.

In 1912 Great Britain, whose proposals for a reduction of armaments had been always brushed aside, made a sincere effort to come to an understanding with Germany. Detailed information has not yet been published, but the authoritative statement of Sir E. Grey sums up the effort and its results: 'The negotiations for an Anglo-German agreement in 1912 . . . were brought to a point at which it was clear that they could have no success unless we in effect gave a promise of absolute neutrality, while Germany remained free under her alliances to take part in European war' (Letter to *The Times*, August 26, 1915). Such an undertaking would have dissolved the Triple Entente and the Diplomatic Group, reduced Great Britain to complete isolation, and left Germany free to make war on the Dual Alliance at her pleasure. It would not have secured European peace; it would have made war an absolute certainty and a war in which Germany would have secured the command of the sea against the Dual Alliance.

The Balkan Wars.

The Balkans provided, as so often, a new and unexpected departure. In October 1908 Bulgaria threw off Turkish suzerainty and her ruler assumed the title of Tzar. Turkey, involved in war with Italy over the annexation of Tripolitana, had scarcely made peace (Treaty of Lausanne, October 18, 1912) when she was confronted by the Balkan League of Serbia, Greece, Montenegro, and Bulgaria, and by the war and complete defeat which ended in the Treaty of London (May 30, 1913). The second Balkan war between Serbia and Greece as allies against

Bulgaria, in which Rumania intervened, was concluded by the Treaty of Bucharest (August 10, 1913).

The course of events was disconcerting and disagreeable for Germany and Austria. The defeat and reduction of Turkey destroyed or seemed to destroy the results of twenty-five years' diplomacy; the Italian annexation of Tripoli strained the Triple Alliance severely, and the relations of two members of that alliance, Austria and Italy, were in a critical condition: the Balkan League and the expansion of Serbia and Greece seemed definitely to block the advance of Austria to Salonica, while Slav nationalist aspirations made the internal problems of Austria-Hungary more difficult than ever. How Germany viewed the new situation is clear from the great armament budget of 1913, which in addition to large increases in the army put £60,000,000 at her disposal for military equipment. How Austria viewed it we know now from the Italian revelation that Italy was invited in the summer of 1913 to concur in an Austrian attack on Serbia in order to rob her of the fruits of two victorious wars and reduce her to complete dependence on Austria—an invitation firmly rejected by Italy.

The Triple Alliance to all intents and purposes came to an end in the course of 1913. The assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand (June 26, 1914) and the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia (July 23), after a week of feverish efforts on the part of Great Britain to avert war and find a *modus vivendi* between Austria and Russia, efforts in which she was not assisted by Germany, were followed by the German declaration of war on Russia (August 1) and on France (August 4). Italy proclaimed

her neutrality. The German and Austrian declarations of war 'were', the Marquis of San Giuliano officially declared, 'in conflict with the purely defensive character of the Triple Alliance'. Italy declined to recognize in Germany's action a *casus foederis*, and Italy's action practically dissolved the Triple Alliance, although the formal denunciation of the treaty did not take place until May 3, 1915. Great Britain was involved in the war, when Germany refused to follow the example of France and give a pledge that she would observe the neutrality of Belgium and Luxemburg, to which she was bound as a signatory to the treaty of 1839, and when, in defiance of her treaty obligations, she invaded Belgium.

Prince von Bülow, writing in 1912, concludes his study of *Imperial Germany* with this remark: 'The number of problems we have solved since 1870 is small compared with the number that still await solution.' The action of the Imperial Government in 1914 is the best commentary on the principles and methods of German policy; it certainly has not reduced the number of problems for solution that await Prussia and Imperial Germany in the future.

NOTE

For the periods from 1890–1914 see S. Münz, *Von Bismarck bis Bülow*; Graf zu Reventlow, *Die auswärtige Politik Deutschlands, 1888–1913* (a fuller treatment from a German but critical point of view); Prince von Bülow's *Imperial Germany* (Eng. transl.); Wickham Steed's *The Habsburg Monarchy*, and the invaluable works of Dr. Seton Watson. Four useful French books are L. Hubert, *L'Effort allemand*; G. Bourdon, *L'Énigme allemande*; J. L. de Lanessan, *L'Empire germanique sous Bismarck et Guillaume II*; and H. Moyset, *L'Esprit public en Allemagne vingt ans après Bismarck.*

A summary of the chief treaties and conventions, with an introduction, is given in R. B. MOWAT, *Select Treaties and Documents* (Clarendon Press), and more fully in P. ALBIN, *Les Grands Traités politiques de 1815 à nos jours* (2nd edition, 1915). The documents bearing on the origin of the war of 1914 are published in the official publications by the various Governments; they are analysed in *Why Great Britain is at War* (Clarendon Press), in J. W. HEADLAM, *A History of Twelve Days*, and in Dr. GILBERT MURRAY'S *Foreign Policy of Sir Edward Grey* (Clarendon Press). A brilliant and interesting study of forces and conditions in Germany will be found in Baron BEYENS, *L'Allemagne avant la Guerre* (1915).

For Bismarck and the post-Bismarckian period see particularly: *Bismarck*, by C. GRANT ROBERTSON (a biography); E. LUDWIG, *Bismarck* (Eng. trs. 1927); J. V. FULLER, *Bismarck's Diplomacy at its Zenith* (Harvard Historical Studies); H. ROTHFELS, *Bismarcks englische Bündnispolitik*; E. BRANDENBURG, *From Bismarck to the World War*; E. L. WOODWARD, *Great Britain and the German Navy*; G. P. GOOCH, *Recent Revelations of European Diplomacy*; *Studies in Modern History*; MARRIOTT, *Modern England*; 'Europe and Beyond,' *History of Europe, 1815–1923*; PRIBRAM, *The Secret Treaties of Austria-Hungary*; LANGER, *The Franco-Russian Alliance*; E. FAY, *Origins of the War of 1914*; B. E. SCHMIDT, *The Coming of the War*.

GENERAL WORKS OF REFERENCE

The following short list is not a bibliography of authorities, but simply intended to guide students desirous of working at Prussian history in detail. It is confined to books on the subject as a whole. Special books on periods or aspects are indicated at the end of the chapters dealing with those periods.

MAPS. The Plates in the large historical Atlases of SPRUNER-MENKE, DROYSEN, SCHRADER, and THE CLARENDON PRESS (edited by R. L. POOLE. This last has an explanatory text in English to each Plate).

The Cambridge Modern History Atlas (with prefatory text, which is a supplementary volume to the *Cambridge Modern History*).

A Historical Atlas of Modern Europe (from 1789–1914) by C. GRANT ROBERTSON and J. G. BARTHOLOMEW, Oxford, The Clarendon Press. (This Atlas contains Plates illustrating the evolution of Germany and Prussia, the Partitions of Poland, &c., with a prefatory text and bibliography of works on historical geography. Price 3*s.* 6*d.*)

TH. SCHADE, *Atlas zur Geschichte des Preussischen Staates.* (12 good Plates confined to purely Prussian history.)

W. FIX, *Territorial-Geschichte des Preussischen Staates.*

GENERAL BOOKS. The German and Prussian history chapters in *The Cambridge Modern History* (which have a very full but indiscriminating bibliography of the historical literature) and in RAMBAUD and LAVISSE, *Histoire générale* (vols. 4–12, also with bibliographies of the literature).

A. WADDINGTON, *Histoire de Prusse*, vol. i. (Prussian history down to 1688. The other volumes have not yet appeared.)

H. TUTTLE, *History of Prussia.* (From the beginning to the accession of Frederick the Great.)

L. VON RANKE, *History of Prussia.* (Eng. transl. in 3 vols. Remains still the best general book on the subject.)

H. PRUTZ, *Preussische Geschichte.* (4 vols., not translated. A very suggestive, impartial, and critical narrative.)

T. CARLYLE, *Frederick the Great.* 8 vols. (The first volume and a half contain a brilliant sketch of Prussian history previous to 1740.)

E. DENIS, *La Formation de l'Empire allemand.* (The best single volume on German and Prussian history from 1815–71.)

C. T. ATKINSON, *History of Germany*, 1715–1815. 1 vol. (Deals very largely with the military history.)

In the Historical Series edited by W. ONCKEN—*Allgemeine Geschichte in Einzeldarstellungen*—the volumes by B. ERDMANNSDÖRFFER (1648–1740) and by W. ONCKEN (1740–86, 1789–1815, 1815–90) deal in detail with Prussian history, but none of this important series have been translated into English.

E. LAVISSE, *Études sur l'histoire de Prusse.* 1 vol. (Brilliant and suggestive.)

GREY: *Twenty-Five Years.*

Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, vol. 3.

WINSTON CHURCHILL, *The World Crisis*, vol. 1.

OTTO HAMMANN, *Der missverstandene Bismarck.*

D. J. HALL, *Germany and the Diplomatic Revolution* (1931).

HAUSER and RENOUVIN, *Manuel de politique étrangère*, 1871–1914.

STIEVE, *Isvolsky and the World War*; H. C. PORTER, *Delcassé* (1936); W L. LANGER, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism*, 1890–1902 (1935); RECOULY, *De Bismarck à Poincaré* (1932).

New Material since 1915

This falls under four main heads:

1. Official publications by the respective governments, the chief are: *British Documents on the origins of the War* (ed. GOOCH and TEMPERLEY); *Die Grosse Politik der europäischen Kabinette*, 1871–1914 (German Foreign Office, various editors); *Documents diplomatiques français*, 1871–1914 (French Govt. Commission); *Oesterreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik*, 1908–1914 (Austrian Foreign Office, various editors).

There is a very useful collection and translation into English of the German documents bearing on Anglo-German relations by E. T. S. Dugdale: *German Diplomatic Documents* in 4 vols. (Methuen & Co.)

2. Memoirs by statesmen and others, largely autobiographical, and containing original documents, letters, memoranda, &c.: particularly those of Asquith, Grey, Haldane, and Lloyd George (British), of Bülow, Tirpitz, Bethmann-Hollweg (all translated into English), and of R. Poincaré (French).

3. Biographies of the leading statesmen by authors having access to original material, particularly those of Salisbury, Lansdowne, Rosebery, Asquith, Haldane, Balfour, and Curzon.

4. Critical studies of the new material by historical experts and publicists. For these and Bismarckian material see back, supplement on p. 447.

NOTE TO EPILOGUE

THE preceding Epilogue has been retained as it was written in 1915, not merely because, owing to the stereotyping of the text, drastic revision would not be possible, but mainly because it represents the state of knowledge and atmosphere in 1915, both of which have been completely changed since. One of the most difficult tasks is to recreate the mentality of the past and to explain why statesmen and nations behaved as they did. The difficulty to-day is not, as in 1915, the incomplete state of our knowledge but the wealth and detail of the material available. Since 1920 the new sources of information have been literally overwhelming in their mass and authority. They have, also, been critically sifted by historical experts in every civilized country. The official archives have been supplemented by the Memoirs or Autobiographies of most of the leading actors, who have frequently added invaluable light on motives and objects of policy by letters, records of conversations, diaries, not written for publication, and the like. It is no exaggeration to say, to-day, that there is no period of history for which the original sources are so complete as those for the period from 1880 to 1914. It is therefore not unsatisfactory, on re-reading the Epilogue, to find that most of the tentative conclusions in it have been substantially confirmed by the evidence now available. Great care is still needed to avoid judging this period from the political standpoint of 1937; for much of the criticism of to-day is purely political or based upon criteria of means and ends or a psychological standpoint unknown to the generation of 1890. It is only possible in this note to provide a very brief summary of the most important points that have emerged since 1915. In the revised bibliography a reader will find the necessary indications for carrying his own investigations as far as he pleases.

Bismarck's resignation, or dismissal, in 1890 marked the end of a period and a system. Since 1871, his main object had been to consolidate the unification of the German Empire and to maintain the central supremacy of Germany on a monarchical and conservative basis in Europe as a whole. War, Liberalism, and Republicanism were grave dangers. Peace, therefore, and the strengthening of 'the conservative forces' in government and society were his aim. But Bismarck, as he was fond of repeating, never forgot that 'Germany had to live with three neighbours' (Austria, Russia, and France), and his subtle and unscrupulous diplomacy, the skill and prestige of which increased with each year, was directed to isolating France and so conducting his relations with Austria and Russia and Great Britain as to prevent them from allying with each other, or with France, against Germany. 'The wires with Vienna and St. Petersburg' (and Great Britain) were not only to be kept open but they must run through the central exchange at Berlin. When Bismarck in 1879 was driven into the Dual Alliance with Austria, he promptly neutralized the commitment by the secret re-insurance treaties with Russia, while he strengthened Germany's flanks by holding Russia and Great Britain apart, and saw to it that the relations of France and Great Britain were kept by the Egyptian Question in a chronic inflammation. The inclusion, in 1882, of Italy in the Dual Alliance was a further isolation of France, a useful check on Austria, and a halfway house to an understanding with Great Britain (Italo-Austrian-British Convention of 1887). But Bismarck had the great statesman's sense of limitations. German supremacy did not mean German domination. 'World Power or Downfall' would have seemed to him as a formula of policy to be either nonsense or insanity. No less was he averse from signing undefined political I O U's or giving blank cheques. Above all, 'as every alliance means a horse and a rider', the rider in the Dual Alliance must be in Berlin and the horse must remain at

Vienna. If from 1882 onwards he worried Great Britain over 'colonies', it was mainly as a sop to a tiresome domestic Cerberus; and it is significant that in his 'Memoirs', which were to be his Political Testament to Germany, colonies and the *Kolonialfrage* are not mentioned.

In 1890 neither the new Emperor nor the new Chancellors in succession were desirous or capable of carrying on the elaborate mechanism of balance and counterbalance, of treaties and secret re-insurances, of open engagements and hidden duplicity, of the big drum and calculated indiscretions which made the Bismarckian system. Bismarck, also, was the dynamic personal force which marks political genius. Caprivi, Hohenlohe, Bülow, Bethmann-Hollweg combined did not equal one Bismarck. With 1890, therefore, begins the 'new era'. The period from 1890 to 1914 records the steady disintegration of the Bismarckian system and with it in 1918 crashed the Hohenzollern Empire, of which that system was the consummate expression and achievement.

It is futile, however interesting, to speculate on how long Bismarck could have kept France 'encircled' and without allies, Russia nearer to Berlin than to Paris, or Great Britain in the 'splendid isolation' of 1890 or, alternatively, have lured her into the flexible but entangling mesh of the Triple Alliance. What is certain is that neither in 1909 nor in 1914 would he have allowed Austria by accomplished facts to drag Germany into the morasses of 'South-Eastern adventure' or surrendered the initiative of policy and final decision to an Aerenthal or a Berchtold.

The one Bismarckian principle to which the 'new era' rigidly adhered was the conviction that alliances can be most easily obtained by bullying and thwarting the States whose friendship you really desired to win. Through the tangle of Anglo-German relations from 1890 to 1914 runs the red thread of the German

principle in diplomacy that Great Britain could assuredly be won by 'A Taming of the Shrew'—and would never be won by 'concessions'. Holstein, Bülow, Tirpitz, and William II followed Otto and Herbert von Bismarck in this method; it was successful against Delcassé in 1905, and against Isvolsky in 1909; but it failed at Algeçiras in 1906, at Agadir in 1911, and in the Austro-Serbian crisis of 1914. Another principle or, rather, idea inherited from the eighteenth century which was continuously re-appearing after 1890 was the formation of a 'Continental League' to curb an insolent or acquisitive Great Britain, noticeable particularly in 1895, 1900, 1905, and 1908 and then fading once more into the twilight of the embarrassed phantoms of the diplomatic underworld. It broke down after 1890, partly because the members of the proposed League really distrusted each other more than they in concert disliked Great Britain, and because an exasperating and treacherous mischief-maker was an Island Power and could only be controlled by command of the sea and Great Britain persistently was determined to retain that command through the 'Two-Power' standard of her Navy. After 1905 the real issue between Germany and Great Britain was concentrated on the question: was the new and expanding German fleet really a bid for the command of the sea?

In 1890 the setting of the European stage was so different that the position reached by 1914 was as much a 'Revolution' as the famous 'Diplomatic Revolution' of 1756. In 1890 German supremacy was unchallenged and unchallengeable; France was isolated and without an ally; Russia and France were by tradition and interests antagonistic to Great Britain; Austria was controlled by Germany; Italy was in the Triple Alliance. The documents are full of possible wars, most likely between France and England, France and Germany, England and Russia, or Austria and Russia. Bismarck assured Salisbury in 1888 that serious antagonism between Germany and England was unthink-

able and clean against the fundamental interests of both States. Great Britain was in 'splendid isolation', i.e. she had no contractual obligations to any of the Great Powers and was in a cryptic neutrality towards all. But she had a potential and powerful 'casting vote', which she had used in the past with decisive effect. Would she emerge from her isolation and use it again—no less decisively but in whose favour? The history of British foreign policy from 1890 is the emergence of Great Britain from 'isolation' to the decisive use of her casting vote.

The story can now be read, almost from day to day, in the massive volumes of the German and British archives, and read on both sides of the diplomatic curtain, existing then but lifted now, and lit by the footlights of the archives of France, Russia, Austria, and Italy. Be it remembered that the authors of these tens of thousands of documents were not writing for the benefit of the historian of to-day—they were recording thoughts, motives, instructions, fears, policies, frequently in issues of the gravest responsibility and consequence—and they were often as ignorant of 'the other side' as the man in the streets of their respective capitals. This overwhelming new information is almost a blinding illustration of the fallibility of even trained and able judgements in human affairs; but it provides also a marvellous and authentic picture of national mentalities, of human hopes and aspirations—and above all of fears. Fear that your neighbour, friend or foe, may be, and probably is, planning to treat you as you are planning to treat him. Power Politics and the vaunted *Realpolitik* only too often and disastrously are the mask of a fear, born of ignorance or half-knowledge. For the Power and the Reality lay for the most part in forces neither calculated nor calculable by the diplomatist.

The critical dates preceding 1914 are 1890, 1894, 1896, 1902, 1905, and 1911. Bismarck's removal and the refusal to renew the re-insurance Treaty with Russia brought Russia and France

into the alliance of 1894—the one result which Bismarck had always feared and so far prevented. In 1896 begins the tension between Great Britain and Germany, which was never again effectively relieved. The 'Fashoda Crisis' of 1898 convinced Delcassé that an understanding with Great Britain must replace the traditional antagonism and this led in due course to the Anglo-French Entente, which in effect gave Great Britain a free hand in Egypt and France a free hand in Morocco. The entente led to an Anglo-Russian entente in 1907, while in 1902 had come the Anglo-Japanese Treaty. By 1907, therefore, the situation of 1890 had been transformed. The Triple alliance of Germany, Austria, and Italy was confronted with the Dual alliance of France and Russia, flanked by the Anglo-French and Anglo-Russian ententes and the Anglo-Japanese alliance. Italy, also, had made it clear that the Triple alliance could not impose on her war with Great Britain. The grouping of 1914 was in fact already framed in 1907. In 1890 France had been 'encircled; after 1907 Germany indicted British policy as 'encircling' the Hohenzollern Empire. Before and after 1890 an Anglo-German Treaty and alliance could have been either a completion of the Bismarckian system or the substantial basis of a new system. First suggested by Randolph Churchill in 1885, discussed by Salisbury in 1887, offered by Bismarck in 1889, strongly pressed by Chamberlain from 1898 to 1901, it came to nothing. Holstein, the famous and irresponsible *Éminence grise* of the German Foreign Office, refused to believe that either France or Russia could come to an understanding with Great Britain. If Delcassé had 'to go' in 1905, Germany failed in her Moroccan policy, in her effort to break the Anglo-French Entente and in her attempts to hold Great Britain and Russia apart. Holstein's forced resignation in 1905 proclaimed the failure of the post-Bismarckians to find an alternative to the abandoned Bismarckian system. But by 1905 Tirpitz, with

Bülow's aid, had become the real 'grey eminence' to William II. The Naval Laws and the building of a powerful German fleet became the central issue of Anglo-German relations. Tirpitz and Bülow worked on two hypotheses—'the risk theory' and 'the danger zone'. The first was to make the German fleet so strong as to make war between Germany and Great Britain a very grave 'risk' for Great Britain; until the fleet was strong enough Anglo-German relations must be steered through 'a danger zone'—and once the zone had been passed and the German fleet had been made England would be asking for an alliance on German terms. The difficulty was that, if the British proportionately increased their fleet, 'the risk' might not be effective and 'the danger zone' would in consequence continually be prolonged. This is precisely what happened. The finality promised in 1898 was farther off in 1911 than in 1905 when the danger zone was to have been passed. When Bülow 'resigned' in 1909, Germany was in a far more unfavourable international position than in 1898 and the Bosnian crisis of 1909 revealed a dependence on Austria, further emphasized by the break-up of the Turkish Empire in Europe, the Balkan Wars, and the increasing friction between Austria and Italy.

Bismarck, to repeat, had a definite system. His successors of 'The New Era' could not decide on their real objectives; they were the directors of an Empire growing in population, wealth and power, conscious of its strength and inspired by an intense nationalism, involved in a foreign policy which had no real continuity of aim, and consisting rather of a series of restless expedients to assert German prestige, without a unity of direction or a final stability in view. Grey frequently maintained that the British Cabinet had to deal with three German Foreign Offices—the official Chancellor, the Emperor William, and the German ambassadors in London. The long supremacy of the irresponsible

Holstein (1890–1905) was a disastrous chapter in German History: the impulsive interventions of the Emperor with resounding declarations, which were misunderstood both in Germany and in Great Britain, and the refusal of the German Foreign Office to believe what their Ambassadors in London were daily and truthfully reporting are confirmed by the documents. Variable and bewildering as often were his moods and phases, the Emperor consistently persisted in one unshakable conviction that demands for the limitation of 'his' fleet were an impertinent interference with 'his' right to have such a fleet (or army) as he judged necessary, that English hostility was due to jealousy of German industrial competition and efficiency, and that England could only be brought to 'her senses' by putting (in Tirpitz' phrase) a wholesome fear in the heart of the (potential) enemy. The Emperor certainly did not desire war with Great Britain or a 'World War', but he did little or nothing to remove or alter the conditions which made Germany a 'mighty electric dynamo of military power', which might be switched on—from Vienna.

In 1871 the population of France was 36½ millions, of Germany 38½ millions, in 1891 the numbers were 38¼ and 48 millions, and in 1914, 40 as against 65 millions. The difference between the two populations made possible 'the Schlieffen Plan' for crushing France (by an invasion of Belgium) in six weeks. In 'power politics' numbers alone can annihilate. To the natural question, at what point did Anglo-German relations go irretrievably wrong, no certain answer can be given, but the documents suggest two dates on which both countries stood at fateful cross-roads—1898, when both France and Germany began to discuss competitively the terms on which the 'British casting vote' might be secured, and 1912, when the failure of the Haldane Mission convinced the British Cabinet that an understanding with Germany was only to be obtained on the impossible terms of a dishonourable neutrality, in the event of a war between

France and Germany. The new Naval Law of 1912 brought Germany back to the 'risk' theory and 'danger zone' policy of 1898. Before Germany had passed through the new 'danger zone', which had already lasted for fourteen years and was definitely to end, on Tirpitz' calculation, about 1917 or 1918, the invasion of Belgium (August 2, 1914) had brought the British Empire into the Great War, and the 'risk theory' had become a test by facts and not a formula of power politics in international relations, or a preamble to justify further statutory extensions of the German fleet.

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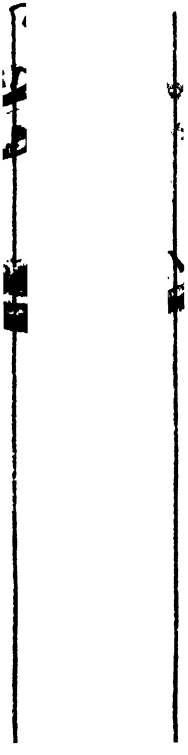

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